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USSR REPORT  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

## MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 1, January 1986

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## QUESTIONS OF SOVIET STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT AT START OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 86 (signed to press 24 Dec 85) pp 9-15

[Article by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Docent, Col A. G. Khorkov, published under the rubric "Soviet Military Art"]

[Text] With the rise of mass armies, the successful conduct of a war became possible under the condition that by the start of military operations the large groupings of troops and naval forces were deployed on selected sectors and had occupied the initial position for carrying out the first operations (engagements) in accord with plans worked out in peacetime. As the experience of the last two world wars shows, the establishing of such groupings was carried out in the course of the strategic deployment of the armed forces and this included: the conversion of them from a peacetime footing to a wartime one, concentration on selected sectors as well as operational deployment of the troops and naval forces in the theater of operations. Here the specific content of these measures, the sequence and methods of carrying them out depended upon the military-political situation, the aims of the state in the war, the strength and capabilities of the peacetime armed forces, the physico-geographic conditions of the theater of operations and the methods of initiating the war by the enemy and conducting the first operations.(1)

In World War I of 1914-1918, for example, the strategic deployment of the armed forces in the opposing coalitions was carried out almost simultaneously and without any substantial opposition from the enemy. The concentration and deployment of troops in the first strategic echelon was completed by France and Germany in 10-12 days, while Russia required 20 days and Austro-Hungary 23 days after the declaration of war.(2) The strategic groupings were established directly along the state frontiers. The operational cover for troop deployment was provided by cavalry and infantry formations of the first operational echelon.

Under conditions where wars began to be initiated by aggressive states without any declaration, by a surprise attack, the methods of strategic deployment of the armed forces assumed new traits. While in World War I, the concentration and deployment of troops were carried out after its declaration and the general mobilization, in World War II the aggressive states carried out these measures ahead of time and were completed by the start of military actions.

In truth, the countries which were subjected to the surprise attack had initiated certain measures for the covert deployment of their own troops even in the prewar period, but they were unable to do this completely and the aggressor gained significant advantages. The lead in the concentration and deployment of its forces gave it the possibility of launching the first attack with powerful troop groupings, to seize the strategic initiative and check or disrupt the strategic deployment of the opposite side's armed forces.

In preparing the nation to repel imperialist aggression, the Central Committee of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] and the Soviet government undertook energetic measures aimed at the greatest possible strengthening of the socialist state's defense capability and increasing the combat capability and readiness of the armed forces.

In utilizing the growth of the nation's economy, the party worked constantly on the technical rearming of the troops and naval forces, on increasing the combat skill of the personnel and improving troop command and control.

As a result of the successes achieved in the area of industrialization, the output of weapons and military equipment constantly increased. More advanced models of firearms, artillery, tanks and aircraft were developed and introduced.

On 1 September 1939, the USSR Supreme Soviet ratified the Law on Universal Military Service which reinforced the conversion of the Army and Navy to a professional manning principle and made it possible to significantly increase the size of the Armed Forces.

The increase in overall size had favorably on increasing the capabilities for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces. In practical terms, this was expressed in the organizing of new rifle divisions and the gradual conversion of the units and formations to wartime TOE. Thus, while on 1 September 1939, there were just 25 headquarters of rifle corps, 96 rifle divisions and 1 motorized rifle division, by the start of the war there were 62 rifle corps headquarters, 198 rifle divisions and 3 rifle brigades. In June 1941, the Soviet Armed Forces had more than 5 million men under arms, over 67,000 guns and mortars, 1,861 new tanks, 2,739 new type aircraft, 563 fighting ships, including 287 torpedo boats. (3)

The increased danger of an attack by Nazi Germany and the involvement of the Soviet Union in a world war, the greater military-economic potential of the nation as well as the increased size of the Army and Navy necessitated the incorporation in the period preceding the Great Patriotic War of changes in the mobilization plan, the plan for covering the state frontier and the plan for the concentration and operational deployment of the Armed Forces for repelling aggression.

In working out the defensive plan, the General Staff proceeded from the supposition that the Soviet Union had to be ready to wage an armed struggle simultaneously in the west and in the east. Here the most probable and dangerous enemy was considered to be Nazi Germany. In line with this, the main forces of the Soviet Army were to be concentrated along the Western



frontiers and in the Far East there were to be troops which could guarantee a stable situation in this area.

It was assumed that military operations in the West would commence with the repelling of an attack by major enemy forces, combat would immediately develop in the air and air strikes would be made against the enemy troops and rear objectives. The formations from the first echelon rifle troops of the cover armies and the fortified areas of the border military districts, together with the Border Troops, should check the enemy advance while the mechanized corps, in cooperation with the second echelon rifle divisions of the armies, with air support would launch powerful counterstrikes and create favorable conditions for going over to an offensive. It was felt that under the cover of these forces, mobilization and deployment of the second strategic echelon would be completed. Here the troops of Nazi Germany were erroneously put under the same conditions.

In the border districts, plans were worked out for bringing the troops to a state of combat readiness and moving them up from their permanent locations to the deployment lines. In the fleets and flotillas, a system was worked out for operational readiness and this envisaged the successive transition of the naval forces from state No 3 to state No 2 and then to state No 1.

Since the threat of an invasion by Nazi troops of our nation's territory was becoming evermore apparent in the spring of 1941, in the interests of establishing definite plans for the operational-strategic groupings, we began to move troops up from the interior and concentrate them on the most probable strategic sectors. Thus, from 26 April the military councils of the Transbaykal District and the Far Eastern Front began to dispatch to the West a mechanized corps, 2 rifle corps and 2 airborne brigades. The Urals Military District was instructed by 10 May 1941 to send 2 divisions to the Baltic Separate Military District, while the Siberian Military District by 15 May 1941 was to send a division to each of the Western and Kiev Special Military Districts. (4)

In mid-May, in carrying out the orders of the General Staff, 28 rifle divisions and the headquarters of the 16th, 19th, 21st and 22d Armies began to move from the interior districts to the border ones. The troops were relocated secretly, under the guise of sending the units to camps. Here the schedule for train traffic over the railroads was not altered.

In May -- the beginning of June, around 800,000 reservists were called up from the reserves. This made it possible to increase the manning rate for almost 100 rifle divisions, a number of fortified areas, Air Forces units and other troops.

On 14 June, a secret regrouping of the formations inside the border military district commenced. A larger portion of them moved up to areas that were 20-80 km away from the state frontier. However, by 22 June, only individual units had succeeded in reaching the designated places.



The first echelon formations from the cover armies located close to the frontier were not to be moved. Their moving up directly to the frontier could be carried out only under a special order.

By 22 June 1941, there were 56 rifle and cavalry divisions and 2 brigades in the first echelons of the cover armies in the Western border military districts. In the second echelons of the armies, there were 52 divisions located 50-100 km away from the frontier. There were 62 divisions in the reserve of the districts and these were spread out along a front of 4,500 km and to a depth from 100 to 400 km. (5)

The fortified areas held an important place in carrying out the covering tasks. Their construction was carried out at a rapid pace. But the volume of defensive work was too great and industry was unable to provide it with materials, equipment and weapons. For this reason the defensive structures were late in being completed, they were carried out according to a simplified scheme, at times without sufficient weapons. The personnel of the fortified areas occupied only those permanent fortifications and firing positions which had already been completed.

In the aims of increasing troop combat readiness in the Western military districts, the people's commissar of defense during 14-19 June issued instructions to bring their headquarters to the field command posts during the period from 21 through 25 June and to carry out measures to camouflage airfields, troop units and important military installations.

The Soviet government showed great caution in resolving the questions of a mobilization nature and the moving up of troops. All measures related to preparing to repel the aggressor were carried out considering not giving Germany the slightest pretext for an attack on the Soviet Union. Each decision to move up troops according to the covering plan was carefully weighed and the advance itself was carried out observing the necessary camouflage measures.

The treacherous attack by Nazi Germany did not make it possible to complete the entire range of important defensive measures. Many of them remained incomplete due to a number of objective and subjective factors, of which the decisive was the mistake made in determining the time and possible method of initiating the war. The Soviet Command did not succeed in completing the organization of troop groupings capable of repelling the aggressor's attacks in the Western border military districts while the Nazi Troops by the time of the invasion of Soviet territory had been fully mobilized, they were at full strength and concentrated along our frontiers in a grouping favoring the offensive.

Under the conditions of the surprise attack, the dynamic development of military operations and the rapid advance of the enemy shock groupings deep into our territory, it was extremely difficult to carry out measures for the strategic deployment of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The troops of the border military districts were brought to full combat readiness with a certain delay, as the directive of the people's commissar of

defense which warned of a possible Nazi surprise attack during 22-23 June was dispatched there only in the evening of 21 June and was received late at the staffs of the military districts. Many of the covering formations and units by the outbreak of the war had not received any of the essential orders and for this reason were not promptly brought to a battle-ready state. Caught unaware, they were unable to take up the defensive lines envisaged by the plans at the designated time and were forced to enter battle on the run and piecemeal.

The Air Forces of the Western border districts entered the war also under extremely bad conditions. Aviation, regardless of the obvious threat of an attack by Nazi Germany had not been brought to a state of combat readiness. A significant portion of the air units was located at airfields close to the state frontier. Poorly camouflaged, the majority of them had poor air defenses.

However, it must be pointed out that in receiving intelligence data on the growing preparation of aggression, individual commanders of the military districts showed independence and initiative, taking measures to increase the level of troop combat readiness. For example, in the Odessa Military District on the eve of the war aviation was brought to an increased state of readiness, it was rebased to operational field airfields, spread out and camouflaged. The district Air Forces staff moved to a command post and organized contact with the command posts of the air formations. The measures carried out made it possible to organize the effective repelling of the enemy surprise air raids.

On 22 June, the Baltic, Western and Kiev Special Military Districts were transformed, respectively, into the following fronts: Northwestern, Western and Southwestern while the Leningrad District on 24 June became the Northern Front. On 25 June, the Southern Front was organized on the basis of the headquarters of the Moscow District, the 9th Army of the Odessa District and the 18th Army of the Southwestern Front.

With the start of the war, the bodies of strategic leadership for the Armed Forces were reorganized. On 23 June, by a decree of the VKP(b) Central Committee and the USSR Council of People's Commissars [SNK], the Headquarters of the High Command was established for directing troop combat; on 10 July, this was renamed Headquarters of the Supreme Command and on 8 August, Headquarters of the Supreme High Command [Hq SHC]. In the aim of coordinating the efforts of the operational field forces, on 10 July, the high commands of the strategic sectors were established while the Soviet Army General Staff was transformed into the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

The attack by Nazi Germany on the USSR demanded that the Communist Party and Soviet government initiate extraordinary measures to mobilize all the state's resources for repelling aggression. On 22 June, by an ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, on the territory of a number of republics and oblasts marshal law was introduced, and on the following day mobilization started for reservists and those liable for military service born in 1905-1918 in 14 military districts. This was carried out openly, encompassing the entire territory of the Soviet Union, with the exception of the areas of

Central Asia, the Transbaykal and the Far East, and made it possible to increase the size of the Soviet Armed Forces by the induction of reservists and those subject to military service.

The mobilizing of a majority of the rifle formations in the border military districts consisted in converting them to wartime TOE. The formations received additional personnel from persons called up from the reserves. They received the lacking number of motor vehicles, tractors and horses from the national economy.

The forced retreat of our troops into the interior of the nation greatly complicated the carrying out of measures to mobilize in the border military districts and in the areas directly adjacent to the state frontier it was actually not possible to carry them out. The mobilized contingents of the border areas were sent from the assembly points according to plans to the troop units, to their peacetime positions which in a number of instances had been abandoned with the start of the war. As a consequence of this, many of the inductees were unable to reach their destination. Also disrupted was the plan for moving personnel and motor transport according to centralized orders from the other military districts. Thus, the troops from the Baltic, Western and Kiev Separate Military Districts were left under strength in terms of personnel, motor vehicles and tractors.

The mobilization of troops in the Leningrad and Odessa Districts, in being carried out without substantial interference from the enemy, was implemented in accord with the plans. As a total for the nation, by 1 July (in 8 days of the war) some 5.3 million persons had been called up under mobilization.

Simultaneously with bringing up to strength the existing formations (field forces) the State Defense Committee [GKO] began to organize new rifle, cavalry, tank, air and artillery units and formations as well as train command, political and military-technical personnel.

Our industry which in the prewar years had been only partially converted to the increased output of military equipment and weapons was unable to fully supply these to the newly organized formations and units as well as those being brought up to the wartime TOE. As a consequence of this, many of them, particularly the tank and mechanized ones, entered the border engagement significantly under strength in terms of tanks, air defense weapons and other combat equipment.

The necessity of replenishing the combat losses, manning a large number of new troop formations for the front and establishing reserves required the call-up of an additional contingent. In August, mobilization was announced for those liable for military service born in 1890-1904 as well as draftees born up to the year of 1923.

The size of the Soviet Armed Forces was also increased by establishing the people's militia and the hunter battalions. The VKP(b) Central Committee approved the initiative of the Leningraders and Muscovites to establish units and formations of the people's militia to aid the front. By 7 July, in Moscow and the oblast 12 divisions were organized (around 120,000 persons), and in



Leningrad there were 10 divisions and 14 separate artillery-machine gun battalions (over 135,000 persons). During the summer and autumn of 1941, around 2 million persons joined the people's militia, organized in almost 60 divisions, 200 separate regiments and many different subunits. A portion of them was sent to the front while another served as the basis for organizing regular formations. By the end of July 1941, some 1,755 hunter battalions had been organized with a total size of 328,000 persons (of which more than 250,000 joined the operational army). (6)

Thus, the mobilization work carried out in the nation, regardless of the arising difficulties, made it possible to mobilize a large number of newly organized formations and units as well as strengthen those which existed at the start of the war, to replenish the losses suffered on the front and establish the necessary reserves. By December 1941, the Soviet Armed Forces had fielded 8 operational fronts and 4 separate armies. By the end of this month, the number of field headquarters of all-arms armies had increased from 27 to 58. Some 286 rifle divisions were newly organized, including 24 of the people's militia. (7)

With the start of the war they continued to move up troops and deploy them for fighting. The 22d Army was to concentrate in the area of Idritsa, Sebezh, Vitebsk, the 21st in Chernigov, Konotop; the 19th in Cherkassy, Belaya Tserkov; the 16th Army in Berdichev, Proskurov. (8)

Having established that the enemy was concentrating its main efforts on the Smolensk-Moscow Axis, Headquarters decided to send these armies to new areas with the task of occupying and firmly defending the line of Kraslava, Vitebsk, Orsha, the Dnieper River to Loyev. From 28 June, the 24th and 28th Armies began to move up to the line of Nelidovo, Yelnya, the Desna River (to Zhukovka).

For supporting the boundary between the troops of the Northwestern and Western Sectors from Staraya Russa to Olenino, the 29th and 30th Armies were deployed and further east the 31st and 32d Armies.

On 18 July, Headquarters took a decision to establish the front of the Mzhaysk Defensive Line on the distant approaches to Moscow. It included the newly organized 33d and 34th Armies as well as the 32d Army from the front of reserve armies.

The new 54th and 52d Armies were deployed on the eastern bank of the Volkhov River for reinforcing the troops on the Leningrad sector.

As a total, by 1 December 1941, 291 divisions and 94 brigades had been sent into the operational army. (9)

The experience of the Great Patriotic War has shown that the promptness of the strategic deployment of armed forces is one of the major factors ensuring not only the organized entry into war but also the subsequent course of military operations. Here mobilization, the concentration of troops, their operational deployment and the conduct of the first operations comprise a single, inseparable process.

One of the most important demands stemming from the experience of the last war is that all the measures related to the strategic deployment of the armed forces be planned ahead of time while the formations and field forces in the border military districts be located in a grouping making it possible to successfully carry out any missions which could be raised for them with the outbreak of war. An effort must be made that even in peacetime the position of the troops support the moving up of the main forces in a short period of time to those areas where the necessity may arise of organizing the necessary grouping for carrying out tasks of both an offensive and defensive nature.

The experience of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces at the start of the Great Patriotic War showed with particular persuasiveness that a weak operational cover and the deep echeloned placement of the main forces in the border military districts make it possible for an active enemy by using powerful shock groupings to defeat the defending troops piecemeal.

The strategic reserves were of great importance in the course of the deployment of the armed forces. Their commitment on the threatened sectors made it possible to eliminate the wide breaches which formed after the enemy had driven deeply into the defenses. The reserves comprise the basis of the groupings which launched the strong counterstrikes against the enemy troops which had broken through in depth. The commitment of the strategic reserves made it possible in the concluding stage of the 1941 defensive campaign to carry out the counteroffensive at Tikhvin and Rostov.

The successful conclusion of strategic deployment requires a careful consideration of the specific situation and all difficulties which may arise in carrying it out as well as the determining of the actual time needed to mobilize the troops, to concentrate them and carry out operational deployment.

A major condition in the moving up and operational deployment of the troops is the speed of their movement using all types of transport and the maintaining of combat capability and a constant readiness to fight.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 7, 1979, p 39.
2. Ibid.
3. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1974, pp 418, 421, 425, 427.
4. KOMMUNIST, No 12, 1968, p 67.
5. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 3, p 441.
6. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Vol 5, 1978, pp 497, 498.
7. "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 269.

8. "Nachalnyy period voyny" [The Initial Period of War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 211.
9. "50 let Vooruzhennykh...", p 273.

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## WORLD WAR II OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS DESCRIBED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 86 (signed to press 24 Dec 85) pp 16-23

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col V. T. Yeliseyev: "From the Experience of Army Offensive Operations Conducted Under Mountain Conditions"]

[Text] The experience of previous wars shows that the difficult conditions of mountain terrain have had a substantial influence on troop combat as these impeded the employment of the men and weapons, they complicated cooperation, command and all-round support and required special training of the personnel and preparation of the equipment. The advancing side experienced the greatest difficulties. The rugged terrain with hard-to-cross natural barriers, the limited number of convenient routes and lines of communication, their separateness and difficult climatic conditions necessitated the incorporation of certain changes in the combat and operational configuration of the troops, the granting of greater independence to the advancing groupings and the use of combat methods which differed substantially from the methods of actions on flat terrain.

The Soviet Armed Forces during the Great Patriotic War gained great experience in preparing and conducting an offensive in mountains. The offensive operations conducted by the troops of the 56th Army in January-February 1943 in the Northern Caucasus, the 38th Army in September-October 1944 in the Eastern Carpathians and the 6th Guards Tank Army in the summer of 1945 in the crossing of the Greater Khingan are instructive examples of active fighting in a mountainous terrain and these have kept their importance at present.

Each of these operations was conducted under unique natural-climatic and weather conditions. The 56th Army was fighting on the spurs of the Main Caucasus Range in the worst time of the year when the temperature in the mountains dropped to minus 15-20 degrees, and the mountain spurs were covered with deep snow which greatly complicated troop operations. Stretching on the sector of advance of the 38th Army were the densely forested Eastern Beskids Mountain Ranges (a part of the Carpathians) with steep slopes to 70 degrees and elevations to 700 m. Of all the passes only the Dukla was suitable for troop movements. In the zone of the 6th Guards Tank Army the Greater Khingan Range had a pass with ascents with a grade of 25-30 degrees and descents to 50

degrees. The roads and paths ran through narrow, swampy river mountain valleys which were hard to cross for combat equipment. (1)

Table\*

Scope of Certain Army Offensive Operations Conducted Under Mountain Conditions

Name of Operation, Front, Army, Time of Execution	Composition of Army by Start of Operation	Width		Depth of Operation, km	Duration, days	Rate of Advance, km/day
		Zone of Advance, km	of Breakthrough Sector, km			
On Krasnodar sector, 56th Army of Black Sea Troop Group of Trans- caucasian Front, 16 Jan-2 Feb 43	Rif.Div.--3 Mt.Rif.Div.--2 Rif.Br.--7	60-80	Two sectors: 6 & 10	30	18	1.7
Carpathian-Dukla, 38th Army of First Ukrainian Front, 8 Sep-28 Oct 44	Tk.Crps.--1 Rif.Div.--9 Cav.Div.--3 Inf.Br.(pt)--2 Aib.Br.(pt)--1	68-120	8	60	50	1.2

\* Compiled from: "Armeyskiye operatsii (Primery iz opyta Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny)" [Army Operations (Examples From the Experience of the Great Patriotic War)], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 124; "Bitva za Kavkaz" [The Battle for the Caucasus], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1954, pp 270-299, Diagram 42; "Sovetskaya Voenennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1977, pp 97-98; "V srazheniyakh za Pobedu" [In Engagements for Victory], pp 414-417.

The enemy concentrated its main efforts, as a rule, in covering the sectors accessible for advance and on holding the passages, passes, road junctions, population points and other important objectives. On favorable natural lines centers of resistance were established and in a number of instances also fortified areas. For example, in the Carpathians the Nazi command established an entire system of fortifications which were based upon the so-called Arpad Defensive Line which included strong centers of resistance. The Krosno-Dukla sector was reinforced particularly where the 38th Army was to advance. On the roads and paths the enemy built antitank and antipersonnel obstacles and set out mixed minefields. Many elevations were prepared for conducting multilevel fire.(2)

Regardless of the difficult natural conditions, army offensive operations in the mountains were marked by a decisiveness of goals and in certain of them by great spatial scope (see the Table). Thus, the troops of the 38th Army in the Carpathian-Dukla Operation tied down 18 enemy divisions, including three tank ones. In the course of the operation the enemy lost 52,000 men killed and wounded, 837 guns and mortars, 185 tanks and assault guns and other combat equipment.(3)

From the table it can be seen that the depth of the operations and the rates of advance due to the mountainous nature of the terrain usually were less than on the flat.

Fighting in the mountains required careful special training of the troops. Thus, in the autumn of 1942, certain rifle formations from the Transcaucasian Front were turned into mountain rifle ones. The command of the front manned these formations with mountain climbing instructors and provided the appropriate equipment. The troops trained on specially equipped training fields. The mountain rifle units during their combat training went up into the alpine areas for several days and learned there to cross obstacles and to fight under special conditions. Certain of these units and formations then participated in the operation on the Krasnodar sector. The training of the 38th Army for the Carpathian-Dukla Operation was carried out in extremely limited times, from 4 through 7 September 1944. Nevertheless, great attention was given to teaching the troops how to fight in the mountains. "The commanders and political bodies of the formations concentrated in the Carpathian foothills," recalled the former military council member of the First Ukrainian Front, K. V. Kraynyukov, "were confronted with the task of more quickly adjusting their combat activities, teaching the soldiers, sergeants and officers to fight in the mountains and to familiarize the troops with the basic principles of mountain tactics when outflanking and envelopment are the main type of maneuver and the role of small subunits is unusually increased.(5) In the 6th Guards Tank Army with the arrival of the formations in the Far East, the need arose to prepare the troops and the staffs for the offensive in a new theater of operations.(6) And although in Europe the army had gained definite experience in a mountain offensive, the staff of the Transbaykal Front in working out the subject of the command-staff exercises devoted a significant place to troop operations in desert-steppe terrain and to organizing and conducting an offensive in the mountains. In the formations and units of the 6th Guards Tank Army they worked out such subjects as the preparation and conduct of an offensive across and along a mountain range, the

maneuver aimed at coming out in the enemy's flank and rear, the capturing of a mountain pass and so forth. The conducted military games and exercises had a positive impact upon the level of the command activities of the army command and staffs.

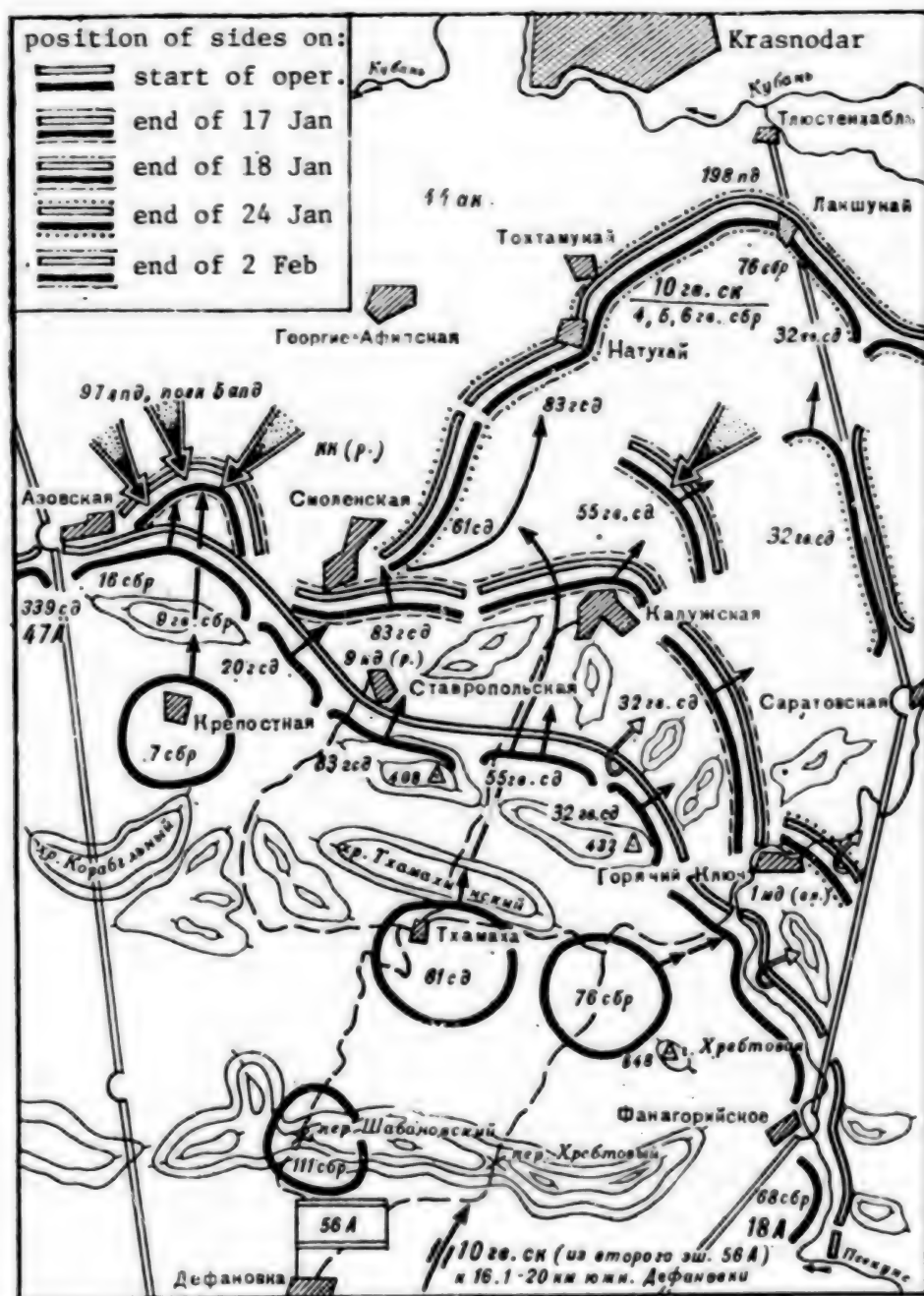


Diagram 1.  
Operation of the 56th Army on the Krasnodar Sector  
(19 January-2 February 1943)



An offensive in the mountains was carried out along the most accessible separate axes on which the main efforts of the troops were concentrated and independent, sufficiently strong groupings were established capable of carrying out the set missions. In the area of the 56th Army, there were two such axes (Kaluzhskaya--Natushay and Smolenskaya--Georgiye-Afipskaya). For this reason, two shock groupings were established. These included rifle divisions and brigades, artillery and mortar regiments and units of engineer troops. The X Guards Rifle Corps and the 111th Rifle Brigade from the army second echelon by the start of the operation were to be positioned in the space behind the shock groupings with the mission of exploiting the success of their advance (Diagram 1). The 38th Army initially was to launch the main thrust on the general axis of Odzikon, Dukla. On the 8-kilometer breakthrough sector were concentrated six rifle divisions out of the nine first-echelon divisions of the army. Directly behind them was located the second echelon (the I Czechoslovak Army Corps) and the army mobile group (Diagram 2). In the Khingan-Mukden Operation the offensive of the tank army prior to reaching the Greater Khingan was carried out along two axes some 70-80 km apart. Mechanized corps fought in the first echelon and a tank corps in the second. Two motorized rifle divisions which had previously been trained for actions in this theater were to be employed for capturing and holding the passes, and in the event of anticipating the enemy, for breaking through enemy defenses along the range in the aim of preserving the forces of the army's tank and mechanized corps for the subsequent strike in depth. This provided greater independence for the tank army in advancing to a significant depth and in isolation from the remaining forces of the front.(7)

The tank formations and units were employed on axes accessible to the tanks predominantly for developing the offensive and capturing important areas and objectives in depth without a halt. Thus, in the 56th Army, the tanks attached to it were to be employed for joint operations with the rifle units after they had broken through the enemy tactical defensive zone, since the particularly complex terrain in this area completely excluded the possibility of the independent employment of the tanks. In the area of the 38th Army, where the offensive developed in the Carpathian foothills accessible for tank operations, the XXV Tank Corps and the I Guards Cavalry Corps were committed to battle on the morning of the second day of the operation as an army mobile group. For capturing and crossing the passes over the Greater Khingan in the course of the offensive of the 6th Guards Tank Army, the V Guards Tank Corps was put in the first echelon as it possessed greater cross-country capability in the mountains in comparison with a mechanized corps.

In organizing the artillery grouping in the mountains, the army commanders and staffs considered primarily the difficulties of its reallocation and maneuvering from one sector to another in the course of the fighting. In the 56th Army, added to this were the difficulties of the prompt concentrating of the artillery and the taking up of its firing positions. Only one-third of the available artillery was able to participate in the commenced operation. In the 38th Army, the basic bulk of the artillery was concentrated in the infantry support groups and in the battalion artillery groups and this provided greater independence for the regiments and divisions advancing in the wooded mountains. Experience showed that in the course of fighting on terrain with sharp changes in altitude, the use of cannon artillery was more difficult





the ground attack planes and fighters and shortened the range of bomber flights. At the same time, under the conditions of mountainous terrain, the role of aviation in providing fire support for the troops rose. In a number of instances this was the only means of destroying roads, bridges and other structures and for launching strikes against enemy troops on the backsides of rocky elevations, in gorges, defiles and in passes. Considering this, for example, with the start of the offensive all the forces of the 5th Air Army were switched to supporting the 56th Army which was fighting on the sector of the main thrust of the Black Sea Troop Group. For supporting the offensive of the 38th Army in the Carpathian-Dukla Operation, some 1,600 aircraft sorties by the 2d Air Army were assigned for the first 5 days.(9) In the Khingan-Mukden Operation, around 40 percent of all the aircraft sorties of the 12th Air Army were used for supporting the 6th Guards Tank Army.(10) Due to the increased difficulty of detecting enemy objectives for conducting air reconnaissance, smaller areas had to be assigned than on flat terrain. While in ordinary operations up to 11 percent of all the aircraft sorties of the frontal aviation was spent on reconnaissance, in the mountains almost twice this amount had to be made.(11) The tactics of the branches of aviation also had its particular features. Since the simultaneous employment of large air forces in the mountains was impeded by the rapidly changing weather and by the terrain features, concentrated strikes were employed relatively rarely. The units of ground attack and bomber aviation fought in small groups in waves, attacking one or several objectives. Fighter aviation devoted basic attention to covering the troops fighting in the most vulnerable areas (narrows, gorges and passes), carrying out this mission, as a rule, by air patrolling. "Free hunting" was also widely employed using the difficult weather conditions and the terrain for surprise attacks.(12)

The main efforts of the engineer troops were concentrating on maintaining the existing roads in order as well as preparing column tracks which provided the advance of the formations and units of the first echelon, the maneuvering of the second echelons, the reserves, the mobile groups and the outflanking detachments. As a whole, the proportional amount of road and bridge work in the mountains increased significantly, in comparison with ordinary conditions. For example, in the zone of the 38th army, in preparing the Carpathian-Dukla Operation, in 4 days some 112 km of roads and scores of bridges were repaired. In the Khingan mountains, the combat engineer brigade of the 6th Guards Tank Army which had been assigned to the V Guards Tank Corps worked at full strength. Along with the corps combat engineers, its personnel made a sharp cut some kilometer long and carried out a major overhaul on up to 1,400 linear meters of road, laying 120 cubic meters of rock in this.(13) For rapidly crossing obstacles, the tanks and motor vehicles were equipped with fascines, mats, beams, wheel planks and other at-hand devices figuring two logs and two or three fascines per vehicle.(14) Proper attention was given also to engineer reconnaissance. Platoons of scouts from the 16th Separate Engineer Battalion of the 56th Army during the preparation for the offensive systematically operated in the enemy rear and gained valuable information on its engineer measures. The frequent shifts of the formations from the 38th Army to new sectors in the course of the Carpathian Dukla Operation showed that in terms of the roads it is possible to effectively support these measures only in having a significant reserve of engineer resources.

The particular features of rear support for combat operations in the mountains were determined by the high consumption of materiel and by the difficulty of delivering them. Here are several examples. In the Xhingan-Mukden Operation, the 6th Guards Tank Army in 4 days, under conditions of bad weather, used 3 loads of gasoline and 3.1 loads of diesel fuel. When the roads were made impassable for motor transport because of the rains and a majority of the rear units remained on the other side of the range, the troops were forced to continue the offensive just with the forces of the forward detachments which were given all the remaining fuel. Diesel fuel had to be delivered to certain units by aircraft (some 940 tons were transported). (15) In the formations of the 5th Army the personnel carried ammunition over the passes of the Caucasian Range in very limited numbers (10-15 rounds per weapon). In the 38th Army in the Carpathians, horse packs and transporting by local inhabitants were employed. The most important prerequisite for uninterrupted logistic support of the troops in mountain conditions was an effective echeloning of the material supplies and their rational allocation in the course of combat.

Experience showed that the most crucial stage of an offensive operation in the mountains is the development of the offensive in depth. With the slow advance of the advancing troops, the enemy is able to pull back his troops, bring up reserves and strengthen defenses on the main sectors. Thus, the 56th Army encountered stubborn enemy resistance on the Krasnodar sector where the enemy formations and units had retreated from the passes of the Main Caucasus Range. An analogous situation developed in the course of the operation of the 38th Army in the Carpathians. On the sector of its main thrust, immediately after the start of the offensive by our troops, several enemy divisions began moving up. Just during the first 3 days of the operation, the enemy command shifted five infantry divisions and a tank division to the area of the army. (16) As a result, the rate of advance of our troops noticeably showed down. "In reflecting on the methods for conducting a further offensive," wrote MSU K. S. Moskalenko, "I concluded that the best under the given conditions would be the method of destroying the enemy in its strongpoints and on the major elevations by a combination of heavy artillery-mortar fire on the narrow sectors with frontal attacks and outflanking movements." (17) When the enemy by shifting its reserves succeeded in halting the advance of our troops on one sector, upon the decision of the commander of the 38th Army, the main efforts were concentrated on another. In the course of the operation, the sector of the main thrust was shifted four times and this led to a certain scattering of enemy forces and ensured the surprise of launching an attack against the weak points of enemy defenses. (18)

Each sifting of efforts in the Carpathian-Dukla Operation was preceded by a partial regrouping of the troops of the 38th Army. Experience showed that under mountain conditions more time is spent on this than under the conditions of flat terrain. For example, in order to shift the 70th Guards Rifle Division a distance of 22 km, it took 30 hours. The 121st Rifle Division made a 60-km march in 3 days. The same time was spent in regrouping the IV Guards Tank Corps a distance of just 18 km.

The successful development of an offensive in the mountains was ensured by the increasing of efforts by the first echelon troops by committing the mobile group, the second echelon and the reserves to battle. On the second day of

the Carpathian-Dukla Operation, for completing the breakthrough of the enemy defense on the sector of the main thrust of the 38th Army, initially the army mobile group was committed to battle and after this also the second echelon. On subsequent days the efforts of the troops were increased by committing another two tank corps (XXXI and IV Guards) to battle and these had been shifted to the army from the front's reserve. At the same time, due to the difficult terrain conditions and the fierce enemy resistance, the tank formations lost their maneuverability and strike force. They were forced to advance along the roads in approach-march formations and sometimes in columns suffering great losses in this. Under such conditions the army command switched to the use of tanks for direct infantry support.

The command and control of troops in the mountains, as under ordinary conditions, were carried out by radio, with the aid of wire lines and mobile communications facilities. In order to reduce the screening influence of the mountains, the radio centers and individual radios were carried up to the prevailing heights. With insignificant average rates of advance, the communications of the commanders and staffs with the troops was dependably provided by wire facilities. In the course of the rapid advance of the 6th Guards Tank Army command was basically by radio.

#### FOOTNOTES

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## NAVAL OPERATIONS ON MARITIME SECTORS

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 86 (signed to press 24 Dec 85) pp 24-29

[Article by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Capt 1st Rank (Ret) G. A. Ammon; the article was written from the experience of the first period of the Great Patriotic War]

[Text] The treacherous invasion by fully mobilized Nazi armies which had been concentrated ahead of time on the Soviet frontiers created a bad situation along the entire Soviet-German Front. The surprise of the aggressor's attack, naturally, could not help but tell on naval operations, too. The nature of these was determined by the development of events on land as well as by the content of the primary tasks stemming from the situation.

Because of the rapid advance by the enemy, exceptionally important significance was assumed by the ensuring by the naval forces of the stability of the flanks of the Soviet Army formations which were on the defensive on the coast of the Barents, Baltic and Black Seas, as well as the joint holding of the maritime and riverine bridgeheads, naval bases, sea and river ports. The involvement of the fleets in carrying out these missions came down to providing artillery and air support for the defending ground forces; landing tactical and reconnaissance-sabotage forces in their interests; providing an air cover for the defended objectives and defensive positions using the naval air defense forces; defending bases, islands and bridgeheads from the sea against actions by enemy naval forces; supporting river and sea crossings and protecting the lines of communications linking the defending troops with their main forces. In addition, the fleet evacuated troops and equipment by water.

Artillery support for the ground forces was entrusted to the shore and ship artillery. Here the personnel and tanks of the attacking enemy were neutralized, by using fixed barrage fire certain lines were cut off over which enemy troops could advance and enemy artillery and reserves were fought. With the conducting of active operations by the defending troops, the naval artillery was switched to carrying out the tasks of preparing for the attack and fire support for the troops.

Various ships were involved in firing at shore targets. Most often these were destroyers and cruisers. For example, destroyers and escort ships were

employed over the entire initial period of the war by the Northern Fleet in repelling the Nazi offensive on the Murmansk sector. When the situation permitted firing at visible targets, escort vessels of the "MO" class and minesweepers were employed.(1) The Pripyat detachment of the Pinsk Naval Flotilla, in supporting the riverine flanks of the 75th Rifle Division in the area of Turov (Western Front), successfully employed the artillery of gunboats, patrol boats, armored launches and an antiaircraft floating battery.(2)

A special role was assigned to the shore artillery. The experience of employing it in the initial period of the war demonstrated the high effectiveness of fire in any situation. It was successfully employed for fighting against enemy artillery, for destroying particularly important and strong targets, strongpoints and road junctions as well as for neutralizing and destroying concentrations of enemy personnel and equipment.

The flagship artillery officer of a fleet (flotilla, base) was responsible for the most effective and direct utilization of the ship artillery and prior to the adopting of the next plan and giving the combat missions to the artillery, he became acquainted with the requests of the commanders of the ground formations and units, comparing these with the capabilities of the weapons and the availability of ammunition. After reporting to his commander on the decision taken to employ the ship artillery and coordinating the appropriate questions with the artillery chief of the front (army) who was the superior in operational terms, he planned the forthcoming firing, he clarified the procedure for calling in fire, he organized the preparation and combat employment of the guns and supervised the supply of the ships with ammunition, communications, reconnaissance, meteorological and other data.

Direct control of the ship artillery was provided through the flagship specialists of the formations and units as well as the commanders of the artillery combat units. They were issued in the form of written and verbal orders (instructions) the content of the request to shell one or another objective, the missions for the individual ships, the procedure for target designation as well as the established markers and signals. For improving cooperation with the artillery of the ground forces, ship artillery officers were dispatched as naval liaison officers to the staffs of the armies, corps, divisions and regiments.

The centralizing of command over the artillery resources made it possible to utilize their power more effectively, completely and economically.

In a number of instances, the fire of the ships and shore batteries was called in directly by the commanders of the all-arms formations and units. Here the target designations from them were often inaccurate, the data about the enemy were very general, the results of the shelling were far from always made known and at times the ship and shore guns had to fire at maximum ranges, by squares, and often without correction.

Naval aviation was the most mobile naval force used for assisting the ground forces. This conducted reconnaissance, it covered the defensive positions, the sea and land lines of communications and individual objectives from the



air and made bombing and strafing attacks against the enemy. The forms of its employment depended upon the developing situation and had its own particular features in each fleet. During the first 3 weeks of hostilities, naval aviation was employed effectively in the interests of the ground forces, for example, on the Baltic. On 22 June 1941, the aviation participated in repelling 15 enemy air raids against Liyepaya. On the same day, naval pilots supported units of the 67th Rifle Division and the Border Troops on the line of Bernati, Simaki, the Barta River, making bombing raids against the enemy personnel and equipment.(3) On 25 June, aircraft from the 10th Air Brigade made 139 aircraft sorties to protect the fleet's main base, Tallinn.(4) On 30 June, bombers from the 1st Torpedo Regiment, the 57th Ground Attack Regiment and the 73d Bomber Regiment of the fleet air forces attacked a concentration of enemy tank and mechanized units in the region of Daugavpils, Yekabpils.(5)

For supporting the ground forces during the most difficult period of combat and on particularly threatened sectors, all or almost all of the fleet aviation was employed. Thus, in the defense of Liyepaya, in addition to the 43d Separate Air Squadron which was based at this naval base, many other naval aviation units made combat sorties in the interests of the troops defending the city.(6)

In the course of air support, the making of bombing strikes against enemy troops by individual aircraft or small groups (six-nine units) was effective. Here the DB-3, SB and PE-2 aircraft could bomb both during the day and at night while the MBR-2, GST and 4E-2 could operate only under nighttime conditions. However, the result was not high everywhere chiefly due to the poor preparation of the naval aviation personnel for bombing land highly mobile and small-sized targets (tanks, towed and self-propelled artillery weapons and motor vehicles). Moreover, daytime sorties by the bombers, due to the strong enemy resistance in the air, required the corresponding support. But our naval aviation was short of fighters and there were also difficulties with the basing of the available forces.

The ground attack actions of naval aviation played a major role in supporting the ground forces. These were made by the IL-2 aircraft. They always flew during the day and, regardless of the air supremacy of enemy aviation, caused significant damage to the enemy in personnel and equipment.

The direct assistance of naval aviation to the ground forces was organized and provided on the basis of requests from the all-arms commanders.

From the very first days of the war, important significance was assumed by the landing of tactical and reconnaissance-sabotage amphibious forces (on Satu-Nou Peninsula and in the town of Kiliu-Veke, in Zapadnaya Litsa Bay as well as on Walterholm, Horse, Kugholm, Stakkorn, Elmholm and Morgenland Islands).

The planning and organization of the landing of these forces were carried out by the commanders of the fleets and flotillas and by the commanders of the naval bases on the basis of instructions from the command of the fronts and armies. The landing forces, as a rule, consisted of a naval infantry regiment, or a rifle regiment. A characteristic trait in the organization of

their combat operations was the speed of preparation, the move and landing on the shore, making it possible to achieve surprise actions. Here the fight for the landing was the most important stage. For ensuring its greatest success, if the situation permitted, it was preceded by a counterstrike from the defended beachhead against the advancing enemy troops. For a certain time this distracted the enemy's attention from the area or points of the force's landing.

The forces landed in coastal areas tied down or checked the advance of the enemy moving along the coast and thereby for a certain time supported the holding of the defensive line by the Soviet Army troops and diverted a portion of the enemy forces for defending the coast.

During the initial period of the war, a significant burden rested on the naval air defense forces participating in protecting the defended objectives and defensive positions from the air. The fighter aviation and antiaircraft artillery of the fleet were involved in carrying out this mission. At dawn on 22 June 1941, sailors from the Northern, Baltic and Black Sea Fleets by organized antiaircraft fire successfully repelled German air strikes against the Polyarnoye, Kronshtadt and Sevastopol naval bases. The enemy did not succeed in damaging their ships.(7) In providing air defenses, the greatest effect was achieved by the massed employment of both shore and ship antiaircraft artillery. The fighters were employed predominantly by the air patrolling method. Cooperation between the fighters and antiaircraft artillery was organized by zones and by altitudes.

In the aim of reducing the losses from enemy air strikes, the ships, the troops and rear installations were spread out and carefully camouflaged.

A major task for the naval forces was the defense of naval bases, islands and beachheads against actions by enemy ship forces. The uncertainty as to the scale and nature of these operations brought to the forefront the need to set defensive mine obstacles. The fleets began setting them several hours after the start of the war. Together with the shore batteries, they formed mine-artillery positions which covered the naval bases, the ports and the maritime flanks of the ground forces. Their aim was to weaken the enemy naval forces in their attempt to break through to our coast for landing amphibious forces, making artillery strikes against the objectives and positions, operating on coastal lines of communications and organizing a sea blockade. The setting of large mine obstacles was carried out, as a rule, in the form of minelaying operations with overall leadership being provided by the fleet commander. Significant forces, including aviation, were involved in the operation. As an example, in establishing the mine-artillery position in the Gulf of Finland, during the period from 23 through 30 June 1941, six trips to sea were made and each of these involved 11-16 minelaying vessels (surface minelayers, leaders and destroyers) as well as several support ships and launches.(8) The first laying was carried out under the cover of a specially established ship detachment. Subsequently, the minelaying forces were covered by shore batteries at the Hanko Naval Base, by the shore defense artillery of the Baltic Region and by the fleet's main base; the ships from the squadron based at Tallinn and the 10th Air Brigade were ready for actions.(9)

In certain instances for establishing the defensive mine positions, temporary ship formations were organized with an active staff and definite base point. During a period of intense minelaying they were given additional forces from the naval bases. Thus, in establishing the additional protective line on Gogland Island, a detachment of diverse ships was organized and this was called the "Eastern Position" (commander, Rear Adm Yu. F. Rall).

Individual minelayings were carried out by small groups of ships or by individual ships. For example, in the aim of covering the sea approaches to Liyepaya, the coastal minesweeper T-204 ("Fugas") from 22 through 24 June set 206 mines.(10) For a certain time these impeded the actions of enemy forces (10 torpedo boats and 2 submarines) which were endeavoring to blockade the base from the sea and also led to the sinking of an enemy minesweeper and subchaser.(11)

In the aim of restricting freedom of action for the enemy ship forces, in our coastal zone sometimes in channels, narrows and roadsteads, old or heavily damaged ships, vessels and other floating objects were sunk. Thus, on 3 June, in the mouth of the channel to Port Pyarnu, upon orders of the Baltic Fleet commander, the transport "Everiga" and several barges were sunk (along with the laying of mines).(12)

In fleet combat operations, a significant place was held by maritime shipments in the coastal zone and dependable defense of our lines of communications. On the Black Sea, during the first days of the war, each day around 25 transports were escorted under the security of fighting ships.(13) Maritime shipments in coastal areas also played a major role in the other fleets. Even their brief disruption by the enemy led to a weakening of the defense capability of the defending garrisons and ultimately to the abandoning of the beachheads by them. For this reason the fleets and the flotillas endeavored to prevent the blockading of the defended beachheads from the sea and to promptly deliver here troops, ammunition, fuel and other types of supplies.

The supporting of maritime shipments was comprised of measures to defend the navigation areas and organize a system of convoys. In the former instance, provision was made to organize mine detection, the sweeping of potential mine areas and the escorting of vessels behind sweeps and a patrol service. In the latter instance they organized and supported moves at sea by small convoys.

The necessity of mine detection arose because of the increased mine danger, particularly in the Baltic. This was carried out chiefly, like other types of reconnaissance, by aviation. Air reconnaissance in a number of instances made it possible not only to establish mined areas and prevent minelaying by the enemy but also to gain information on mines previously set by the enemy in our sealanes. But the possibilities of aviation during the initial period of the war were limited and for this reason, in order to reduce the mine danger for the vessels and ships minesweeping reconnaissance was also carried out on the employed channels.

The difficulties of quickly deactivating discovered mines, the incomplete and often contradictory data obtained as a result of mine detection and minesweeping reconnaissance often necessitated the escorting of ships behind



the sweeps. This measure significantly ensured the safety of the escorted vessels and the reliability of the sealanes.

The escorting of convoys was organized considering the greatest reliability of the antisubmarine and air defenses. Security as much as possible was all-round. The convoys were both through and spelled. Patrol boats were most frequently used for escorting the transport. It must be pointed out that combat ships, primarily destroyers and cruisers, were also frequently employed as transports. This measure was caused by the slow speed of the regular transports, the shortage of them, the lack of escort vessels as well as by the strong enemy counteractions. The employment of high-speed and powerfully armed combat vessels for transporting troops, equipment and military cargo made it possible to accelerate the turn-around of the convoys between the loading and unloading points and ensure their greater safety.

When the combat capabilities of defending the bases, beachheads and islands were exhausted or this was no longer advisable, the fleet also carried out the evacuation of troops. The choice of the method (transporting them in a single trip or in several successive runs) depended upon the strength of the defenses and the reliability of the sealanes. Enemy aviation was the greatest danger in evacuating the troops. This is why along with air defense measures, the command of the fleets and the evacuated troops gave important significance to concealment and camouflage. As a rule, the troops were pulled out of their positions and embarked on vessels and ships at night.

Security for the moves was ensured by taking such measures as organizing security for the embarkation area and organizing the groups of transports and escort forces into convoys. The subunits evacuated last in a majority of instances were carried by combat ships which during the move were organized into detachments. If the situation permitted, groups of minesweepers, rescue vessels and patrol boats were sent out from the rear bases to meet the convoys. A maneuvering hydrographic and pilot services were organized for escorting the convoys and detachments through the channels in minefields, particularly at night.

From the very outset of the wars, decisions to employ the navy were taken by Headquarters which included the People's Commissar of the Navy, Adm N. G. Kuznetsov. The Navy and the naval flotillas, as had been envisaged prior to the war, in operational terms were under the commanders of the fronts (armies) for joint operations on the maritime sectors.

The effectiveness and continuity of cooperation between the ground units and formations and the naval forces were provided by joint planning of the operations, by personal contact between the commanders and staff officers, by a uniform understanding of the capabilities of the Army and Navy formations and units as well as by a constant exchange of information on the situation on the land and sea theaters of operations.

In decisively and actively assisting the maritime flanks of the Soviet Army, the Navy helped to ensure their stability and prevented enemy operations from the sea.



#### FOOTNOTES

1. TsvMA [Central Naval Archives], folio 47, file 8406, sheets 9, 10, 10 verso, 11; folio 112, file 141, sheets 81, 92, 96.
2. Ibid., folio 14, file 44, sheets 15, 16.
3. Ibid., folio 22, file 143, sheets 20, 21.
4. Ibid., folio 9, file 109, sheet 53.
5. Ibid., folio 46, file 21649, sheets 26, 27; file 25882, sheets 12-17.
6. Ibid., folio 18, file 40015, sheet 4; folio 22, file 143, sheets 5, 7, 20.
7. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1975, p 37.
8. V. I. Achkasov, N. B. Pavlovich, "Sovetskoye voyenno-morskoye iskusstvo v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Soviet Naval Art in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1973, p 57.
9. Ibid., p 58.
10. TsvMA, folio 9, file 39981, sheets 15, 16.
11. Ibid., file 109, sheet 47.
12. Ibid., folio 9, file 16302, sheet 20; file 703, sheets 72, 74, 320.
13. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 4, p 49.

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## WORK OF STAFF OF 108th GUARDS RIFLE DIVISION

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 86 (signed to press 24 Dec 85) pp 30-35

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Col (Ret) V. P. Savelyev; from June 1943 until the end of the war, V. P. Savelyev was the chief of staff of the 108th Guards Rifle Division. The given article sets out the experience of its staff.]

[Text] In the course of the war, combat made high demands on the work of a staff and it under any conditions was obliged to provide a high quality and prompt solution to a problem. The results of this work were judged by one thing: how fully a division carried out the combat mission and to what degree it maintained battleworthiness for further fighting.

Combat practice convincingly affirmed that the successful activities of a formation's staff depend largely upon the training level of the officers and the staff as a whole. This is why in a combat situation even the slightest opportunity was employed to hold various sorts of exercises, particularly when the division was on the defensive, in the second echelon or the reserve.

During the last 2 years of the war, four staff and command-staff exercises as well as ten joint staff drills were held with the officers from the headquarters of the 108th Guards Rifle Division.(1) These helped to shape up the departments and the staff as a whole as a command body. For increasing the level of the individual training of the officers, significant attention was paid to instructing them in the process of practical activities. Patient demonstration of what should be done was the basic method in the given form of instruction. Also effective was the practice of sponsorship by an experienced officer over a less prepared one. Observance of the principle "Do as I do" have a positive effect upon increasing the skill of the executors.

The following fact shows the effectiveness of the given form of training. In 1944, Sr Lts P. M. Fesunenko and A. K. Babich were appointed to the operations department of the staff. Due to the constant attention and help of the department chief, Lt Col N. V. Popov and his deputy Maj F. P. Shachenko, the young officers in a comparatively short period of time gained the necessary knowledge and skills in the process of work. Initially, they carried out

simple assignments and then independently began to work out combat documents and later to perform their duties fully.

To improve the individual training of the executors, exercises were held to study questions which were carried out simultaneously by several officers. In the course of the breakthrough of the defensive line on the Molochnaya River in 1943 in the Melitopol Operation, shortcomings appeared in the working out of combat reports by the regimental staffs. They did not persuasively depict the dynamics of battle and an assessment of the actions of their subunits and the enemy was made without sufficient justification and this, naturally, reduced the actual value of the documents. In the aim of improving their quality after the conclusion of one of the day-long battles, the first assistant chiefs of staff from the regiments were summoned to the division's command post. We handed out six reports to them which had been obtained from the units over the previous day. Each of them in its own way described and assessed the situation in the area of not only the regiment but also the adjacent units. Here the data on the adjacent units contained most inaccuracies. After my corrections and comments in the margins, the officers against carefully read their own documents and turned them in to me. Then everyone was acquainted with the reports which had been worked out by the division's staff during that day. Such a form of exercise was beneficial.

The work of a staff always had a collective nature. The entire personnel of the staff participated in carrying out a command task and the effectiveness of staff activities as a whole depended largely upon to what degree it was united. Here the teamwork of the staff was determined by the individual training of the officers, by the ability of the chief of staff to work closely with the commander and by the professional qualities of the chief of staff.

Practice has convincingly shown that the personal example of the chief of staff in work and in his conduct in a combat situation is important in uniting the staff. If he has worked indefatigably, if he is capable of clearly organizing the work of the collective, if he is demanding, shows respect to subordinates, and is restrained, then good conditions are established for the cohesiveness of the staff.

Whatever the conditions which existed for the division's staff, clear organization of its work was always of important significance. If proper attention was paid to this, then a calm but intense work pace was maintained in the staff; each executor knew firmly what he had to do, at what time, when his actions had to be coordinated with whom and on what questions or participate in joint work. Then the activities of not only the staff but all the headquarters bodies were carried out without interruptions, in an organized manner and instances of re-doing what had already been done were virtually excluded. The officers understood the commander and chief of staff at a mere suggestion and endeavored to put their skill, experience and knowledge into the assigned job.

The scope of the tasks determined for the staff in preparing for and in the course of combat had a substantial impact on the organization of the work. It must be recognized that at time, without any special necessity, instances of overstating the amount of work were permitted. If battle was to be planned,

then a maximum number of documents to be worked out was taken, or if control was to be exercised, then the desire arose to involve as many subunits as possible in an inspection. With such an approach the executors were very overloaded and this reduced the quality of the tasks carried out, particularly with short times for organizing combat. Much better for things was a reasonable combination of the scope of the staff's tasks and the methods of carrying them out with realistic capabilities of the executors and the determining of the most important tasks the execution of which first determined the success of combat.

In the course of hostilities, the need arose to monitor the fulfillment of the tasks by the regiments and battalions, to issue adjusted tasks and questions of cooperation and coordinate actions with adjacent units. A majority of these measures involved a trip by staff officers. The sending of them to resolve major questions on the spot proved completely effective. However, in a number of instances this led to a situation where a majority of the officers was constantly away carrying out individual assignments. As a result, the main tasks at the unmanned staff were carried out hurriedly, without proper skills and more often late. A considerate attitude toward the employment of the staff officers is one of the most important conditions for their successful carrying out of their tasks in combat and an indicator of the skillful organization of work.

Whatever assignments were carried out by a staff officer, these always left room for showing initiative and creativity. Such officers as the deputy chief of radio signals Capt G. I. Protzenko, the deputy chief of intelligence Capt S. I. Ananyev and the commander of the staff signals company Capt N. D. Gusakov considered it a duty to constantly seek out the new in the employment of the existing men and weapons and in organizing their work. The developing of these qualities was aided by confidence in the capabilities of an officer and excluding petty interference in their work. The instructions of the division's chief of staff to the executors should be viewed from this standpoint. If they are marked by excessive detailing, then the officers learned not to think or to independently seek ways for an effective solution to the questions.

The chief of staff, in giving an assignment to a trained officer, did not go into details for the method of carrying it out. And this proved fully effective. Also beneficial was the procedure where a staff officer, in knowing the content of the combat task and the commander's plan, reported to me on measures which he should carry out as well as the order he planned for doing so. In this instance, it was a question of agreeing with the subordinates or making the necessary adjustments. Practice showed that an executor would work hard to carry out his proposals which had been approved by a superior.

Undoubtedly tasks had to be given differently to an insufficiently trained executor. It was a matter not only of giving the assignment to him carefully but also explaining how to carry it out, what basic measures had to be implemented and in what sequence, from where and at what time men and weapons had to be called in for organizing combat. Without waiting for him to complete the work, a check had to be made on what was done and when necessary



provide help. With such an approach the staff officer with each battle improved his skill and gained knowledge and the skills in carrying out his duties. What he had done timidly in previous combat in looking around at others, was done more actively by him in the following one. However, if the commander and chief of staff were unable to promptly spot these buds of initiative and independence and did not support them and even worse "nipped them in the bud" by shouting without even wondering about the good intentions of the executor, the next time he would scarcely try to evidence this. But if an officer saw that independence encountered support and approval, then the next time he was bolder in evidencing his abilities and skill. Let me give an example of this. In October 1943, in the course of stubborn battles to break through the defenses at Melitopol, the chief of staff of the 308th Guards Rifle Regiment, Maj P. I. Shcherbakov, having assessed the diverse information received by the end of the day from various sources on the enemy's conduct, concluded that in the morning an enemy counterattack was possible with the forces of at least a reinforced regiment and reported his ideas to the divisional staff. We, having assessed the importance of the received information, immediately requested information from the adjacent units, artillery troops and scouts. As a result, new data was gained. Having studied and compared them with what we had, the divisional staff, upon instructions of the commander, took the necessary measures. The enemy on the following morning did launch a counterattack with an infantry regiment and 30 tanks and this was repelled with great losses for the enemy.(2)

In speaking about initiative, one cannot help but emphasize again the wise rule arising out of combat: this should be realized within the context of the overall concept of the superior chief. If this requirement is not observed, then initiative is of no benefit. Such an instance also occurred at the end of October 1943 after the completion of the Melitopol Operation. The troops, after breaking through the Wotan Position were successfully advancing toward the Dnieper. The divisional staff felt that it must be crossed and if a reconnaissance group was not crossed to the right bank before the approach of the units to the river, then the mission would not be carried out. With great difficulty they succeeded in sending scouts to the western shore. But, when the main forces of the division reached the Dnieper, the order was received to participate in defeating the enemy grouping on the eastern bank to the south of Nikopol. The scouts had to turn back.(3)

One of the difficult tasks for the staff was to gain data on the situation. It is difficult to say exactly just what amount of time was spent on this in the total time budget but it is irrefutable that the incompleteness and untimeliness of obtaining the necessary information led to a delay in taking urgent measures, to a drop in the rate of advance and in a number of instances to the loss of initiative in combat. One of the most effective and reliable methods which ensured the prompt obtaining of data on the situation was personal observation by the commander and staff officers of the battlefield.

What role was given to the report and informational documents? The operational summaries and immediate combat reports as a rule reflected events which had already occurred and were not happening at the given time. In practical terms, they provided little information needed by the commander for taking or adjusting a decision. Of significantly greater value for command

and control were the brief extra combat reports which gave the events as soon as they happened. Of the same importance were the verbal reports by subordinates over communications equipment.

In the work of the staff during combat the gaining of data on the enemy was the most difficult. The solving of this problem was achieved by the integrated use of various means and methods of reconnaissance. On the eve of the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, during the defensive on the Dniester bridgehead in 1944, the staff of the 108th Division gained a significant part of the data on the enemy by organizing observation. Scores of observers from early morning to late in the evening patiently studied the enemy defenses. In order to view not only the first position but also the strongpoints located behind the tall bank of the old river channel, observation posts were built in tall trees. By the end of the day the staff intelligence section assembled all the data gained by all the methods and means of reconnaissance, including observation. During the 4 months of fighting on the Dniester bridgehead (May-August 1944), the enemy defenses were thoroughly studied. The extensive work proved worthwhile. All the artillery and mortar fire was made against previously designated targets.

Among the tasks of the staff, planning was considered the most labor intensive in preparing for combat. No matter under what conditions it was carried out or what time was assigned to this, it was an unbreakable rule that the combat documents should be worked out completely, intelligently and drawn up in a proper form.

For accelerating the work usually the plan of a formation commander was immediately plotted on two maps: one was left with the chief of staff and the second was turned over to the operations section. Time was also significantly shortened in observing the principle of officer specialization in working out the documents. If for some reason the executor was unable to do what he should, the document was filled out for him by the section chief or by another executor as a substitute.

The chief of staff in the process of planning played not only the role of the allocator but also a regular executor. Usually in my practical work I wrote out the combat order and more often worked out the combat planning table (for cooperation). In this instance, I did not have to receive additional instructions from the commander but was able myself to concretize and work out the questions, knowing in detail the plan for the forthcoming offensive.

The document prepared by the chief of staff was simultaneously an unique standard of quality which the others endeavored to equal. No one corrected or adjusted it and this obliged the chief of staff to constantly improve his skills and to be up to the demands of combat.

There was no set routine in working out the combat documents. The divisional staff always endeavored to provide the commanders and the staffs of the regiments with information as clear and complete as possible and essential for them to organize combat. The more complicated the combat mission was, the greater the desire of the senior staff to work out the main documents with the greatest detailing possible. And this meant that many questions which should

have been settled by the commanders and staffs of the units were decided by the staff of a division (corps, army). Here it would be hard to say how successfully these questions were settled by the superior staff. Thus, in August 1944, in the course of planning the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, the staffs of the 46th Army and the XXVII Rifle Corps worked out a series of questions for the staffs of our division and its regiments and later on were forced to make adjustments in them because they did not fully consider the specific features of the terrain, the training level of the subunits and the combat qualities of the commanders.

Undoubtedly it was better, as experience was to show, not to take over for the subordinate staffs and not try to "facilitate" their work. Thus, in planning the crossing of the Danube to the south of Budapest at the end of November 1944, the divisional staff did not assume the "excess work" and limited itself to resolving its own questions. But after the regimental staffs had completed the working out of such a major document as the crossing table, they submitted this to the divisional staff which compiled a composite table. In the course of working it out, the data were recalculated and if mistakes were discovered by the regimental staff, immediately the necessary corrections were incorporated. Such a procedure did not belittle the staffs of the units, it gave them initiative in resolving the questions of organizing the crossing and at the same time made it possible for the superior staff to exercise strict control.

Planning could not dispense with carrying out tactical calculations. Among them the calculating of the balance of forces usually held a marked place. This was prepared by the staff prior to the adopting of the commander's plan for each battle. In the calculation they considered not only the quantitative but also, if possible, the qualitative composition of the men and equipment (artillery and mortars by caliber, heavy, medium and light tanks; light and medium machine guns). Instead of companies and battalions, in a number of instances they compared the number of personnel which would take a direct part in the attack. Such a need arose with a low manning level of the units and subunits of the sides as well as when the enemy, instead of regular formations, fought with various groups, detachments and composite battalions which did not provide a clear notion of their combat capabilities. An experienced commander, in relying on the quantitative indicators, in practical terms could correctly determine the degree of intensity of the forthcoming battle, he could anticipate where our units were inferior to the enemy and could take measures to change the unfavorable balance of forces.

Lastly, under any conditions the staff put a good deal of effort into organizing and carrying out supervision. In the interests of increasing its effectiveness, during the war years the staff of the division developed certain requirements placed on each inspector and the inspections as a whole. In order to avoid duplication of these with the regimental staffs, combined inspections were frequently held. Frequent inspections did not prove effective as they did not produce the expected results and in a majority of instances prevented the subunit commanders from working. An inspection was not considered complete if an officer, having detected shortcomings in the work of the commanders and staffs, did not take measures to eliminate these. Certainly the main purpose of an inspection was to provide supervision and



immediately implemented the good proposals of the inspectors which contributed to success in carrying out the combat mission or to improving the activities of the headquarters officials. The basic demand came down in the course of an inspection to obliging the officers to detect what was good, beneficial and worthy of introduction into the work practices of the other staffs and commanders of the units and subunits. Experience showed that it was easier to spot the bad because it was usually immediately apparent. It was significantly difficult to see the positive in daily combat actions all the more as the successes of the inspected subunit (unit) did not differ markedly from the successes of other subunits (units). Undoubtedly this could be done by a staff officer who had good training and the necessary combat experience. For this reason in selecting officers for inspection they unwaveringly followed the rule of sending specialists capable of generalizing the instructive in a skilled manner. Happily over time the staff officers of the formation made it a rule to start a report on the results of an inspection by bringing out the positive experience in the work and actions of the units and subunits, the commanders and staffs. This was not a mere tribute to the demands of the superiors but was an indicator, in essence, of the work style of the divisional staff.

One must pay tribute to the wartime staffs as they gained rich experience in the fierce clash with the enemy. The skillful use of this experience can help to increase the effectiveness of staff work under present-day conditions.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 1299, inv. 1, file 7, sheet 34.
2. Ibid., file 9, sheet 49.
3. Ibid., sheet 79.

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#### MEETING ENGAGEMENT AT BORISOVKA

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[Article by Maj Gen (Ret) A. V. Yegorov published under the rubric "Mastery and Heroism"; during the described period, A. V. Yegorov commanded the 19th Guards Tank Brigade of the III Guards Tank Corps]

[Text] Early in the spring of 1943, the Nazi Command established an offensive grouping in an area to the southwest of Belgorod, having moved up its reserves from the deep rear. Our guards tank brigade participated in the battles which developed here.

Gen N. A. Vovchenko, caught up with us. He stated that the front line had been breached and a threat had developed for the flank and rear of the Voronezh Front. The front commander ordered the corps to check the enemy on the line of Tomarovka and Borisovka. The 19th Guards Tank Brigade was ordered on 15 March to concentrate in the area of Arkhangelskoye ready for actions on the Borisovka axis.(1)

The march had to be organized in anticipation of a meeting engagement. It had become a rule with us each time a battle order was received to assemble the battalion commanders and their deputies at the brigade staff. I did not want to violate this custom now. So the commanders were gathered up on the staff bus.

"Does everyone have maps? Write in the route: Klimenki to the south of Belgorod, then Nizhnyaya Orlovka and Borisovka. The march is to be made in anticipation of a meeting engagement. Operating ahead is the reconnaissance and motorized rifle battalion of Capt F. P. Valovoy with a tank company and an artillery antitank battery. Then will come the brigade staff. After it will be the 167th Tank Battalion of Maj F. V. Chufarov, the 168th of Capt Ya. U. Livshits and then the battalion of Sr Lt A. G. Semusenko, the rear of the brigade and the technical maintenance echelon..."

After a pause, I concluded:

"We should be in Borisovka by 0900 hours of the 15th."  
Late at night, leaving Belgorod behind, the brigade turned onto the road

toward Borisovka. At dawn the columns had reached Klimenki and Nizhnyaya Orlova. Here the morning quiet was disturbed by the noise of Junkers. From Stanovoy farm came the dull thud of firing. The fighting had already started there.... We joined in without a halt. The motorized rifle battalion of Capt F. P. Valovoy had taken the first attack. Having broken through the screen of the 40th Army, the enemy with forces up to a regiment of motorized infantry, supported by tanks, aviation and artillery fire, was attacking our first and second motorized rifle companies which had just taken up their combat positions. I headed to the observation post of the battalion to see for myself how the meeting engagement was developing.

Capt Valovoy, a middle-aged officer with gray temples, intense but calm, in a padded jacket and helmet, was standing in a foxhole. Greeting me he reported on the situation. He and I looked closely at the crest of the hill which had been taken by the enemy. Battle had broken out everywhere: by the houses and in the groves but the main thing was along the highway to Belgorod. Through the binoculars I could see the enemy tanks which were holding up the advance of the battalion. In order to be able to move to Borisovka, these would have to be destroyed.

Arriving at the observation post were the commanders of the tank battalions which I had summoned. I gave them the mission of occupying elevs. 201.2 and 157.2, Styanovoy farm and then Borisovka itself. For carrying out this mission the brigade formed up in two echelons: two tank battalions and a motorized rifle battalion in the first and one tank battalion located in Pogrebnyaki in the second. The brigade command post was also there while the rear services were in Razumnoye.

At 1200 hours, all the cannons and mortars opened fire. As soon as the last minute of the intense shelling ended, through the subunits ran the command: "Forward, to the attack!..."

Thus began the battle at Borisovka. A battle which I will never forget. From the very outset it went beyond the limit of local, tactical significance. As was learned later, the Nazis were endeavoring to reach Belgorod and then Oboyan through Borisovka in order to link up with their Orel grouping and surround our troops on the Kursk Salient.

I was watching the battlefield. The tanks of the forward battalions were rapidly closing with the enemy. The enemy guns were suspiciously silent. The Nazis were obviously afraid to give themselves away ahead of time. Possibly they had called in aviation? Possibly they would attack simultaneously?

Explosions of our shells were still bursting on the enemy-occupied hill while a wave of automatic bursts and shouts of "Hurrah!" were already rolling toward it....

Simultaneously with the rush of the motorized rifle troops to the attack, over their heads thundered the rockets of a "katyush" battalion. The rocket salvo was prompt support for the attack of the Chufarov and Livshits battalions. Reforming into a line of company columns, they moved along a narrow ravine. The vehicles crossed a stream, the edge of a young forest and a crater-marked

meadow. In attacking the Nazis holding Stanovoy farm and the elevations adjacent to it, the tanks without a halt were pushing toward the Belgorod Highway.

The unit to our right, the 18th Guards Tank Brigade of Col D. K. Gumenyuk, had also entered battle. The 3-km space between the brigades was covered by the fire of our batteries. Communications remained stable. Then the adjacent units on the left moved away. Soon thereafter reconnaissance reported that the settlement of Borisovka was occupied by a Nazi tank unit while our units were heading to Tomarovka.

Now we knew where the attack could be expected. The brigade's second echelon was aimed here to defeat the enemy on the march.

The brigade's attack developed successfully. The Livshits battalion fell somewhat behind and I intended to head to it in order to see for myself what the situation was there and help the battalion commander who had not so long ago taken up this position.

As the motorized rifle troops of Valovoy, in jumping across the enemy craters and foxholes, attacked the Nazis from the front, Chufarov's tanks skirted a nameless elevation and closed with the enemy positions at Stanovoy. Along the side of the road they for an instant halted as if hesitating to go down the dusty street. As soon as our artillery had shifted its fire deep into the enemy battle formations, the tanks headed out and were immediately hidden behind the smoking huts.

"Volga! This is Siberian. This is Siberian. Over!" Chufarov reported to me by radio. "We are in Stanovoy."

Frontline experience convinced me that even an insignificant success could be quickly exploited if decisive measures were promptly taken. This is why, instead of the Livshits battalion, I headed off to the Chufarov battalion where things had swung to our favor.

However, the enemy did not want to accept the loss of the good position in the area of Stanovoy. Having brought up its artillery, it unleashed a massed artillery strike against the farm. The shelling lasted about 10 minutes. Before the smoke could dissipate, the roar of motors reached us. Nazi tanks were crossing the ravine directly to Stanovoy from Borisovka. At the same moment two-score Junkers dove on the nameless elevation. Tracer bullets flashed in the sky. The anti-aircraft battery of Sr Lt Vorobyev had opened fire. To the north of us the battery of the Gumenyuk brigade was firing and to the east the corps battalion. In the tall dry grass, the tanks of the Chufarov battalion were turning to the right and left. I ordered him to prepare volley fire and Livshits was to attack the enemy tanks as soon as they had crossed the ravine. Soon thereafter 20 T-34s emerged out of the grove and opened fire. The tanks cut the thawing ground with their steel tracks. One after another the combat vehicles, as if sitting for an instant, discharged sheaves of smoke and fire from the cannon barrels and then rushed forward.



The enemy vehicles slowed down and then began to reform. Under the cover of gun and mortar fire, the Chufarov, Livshits and Valovoy battalions concentrated a larger portion of their forces on the eastern slopes of the nameless hill and drove the Nazis from the farm.

But it was still a long ways to the capture of Borisovka. When I had returned to my observation post, alarming reports began to be received from the companies and battalions as the enemy had employed new tanks the armor of which was not pierced by the shell of a tank cannon. I cannot conceal that I was nervous.

I immediately got in touch by radio with the corps commander. Soon thereafter the corps commander and his deputy for political affairs Col N. V. Shatalov were at my observation post. They decided to personally study the situation on the spot with the appearance of a new enemy combat vehicle the use of which could mean serious problems for us.

"These obviously are Tigers," the general informed me, "the enemy has already employed such vehicles at Leningrad and Kotelnikovo. It is essential to seek out methods for combating them, to hit them not head-on, but in vulnerable spots...."

The corps commander drove off but we continued discussing the developing situation, seeking a way out.

It was clear that our attack on Borisovka was dying out. We had not succeeded in beating the enemy in the meeting engagement and Borisovka remained in its hands. The enemy would soon begin an offensive and was merely waiting for its aviation.

The decision was taken to immediately go over to the defensive and create tank ambushes. The tanks from the Semusenko battalion went over to the defensive on the occupied line along the hills to the west of Pogrebnyaki. The motorized rifle troops of Valovoy were to flow through their positions. The Chufarov and Livshits battalions were to assign one tank company each as ambushes in the area of Stanovoy and along the Belgorod Highway. The remaining forces were to hold up the Nazis as long as possible and then according to a special command outflank the line defended by the Semusenko battalion. The Nazis, believing in their success, would rush into the breach and immediately fall on our antitank line occupied by the five tank companies and antitank battery. The enemy would end up in a pocket of fire, or that was our intention. But still this had to be carried out.

The Nazi attack commenced, as we had assumed, with a massed dive-bomber attack. Initially, dark spots of airplanes could be scarcely seen on the horizon. Soon thereafter the silhouettes of the Junkers became distinguishable. They flew in a triangle and so low that the yellow wing tips could be clearly seen. As soon as the last Junkers disappeared, the Nazi artillery began firing. Then the enemy tanks appeared. I realized that the enemy was concentrating its main efforts opposite the 168th Battalion. It was endeavoring to drive a wedge between it and the 167th Tank Battalion. I immediately switched the radio to transmitting.



"Siberian! Donetsk! Strengthen your fire on the flanks!" I ordered Chufarov and Livshits.

In the meanwhile, having moved up forces and taking cover behind the artillery fire and dive-bomber attacks, the Nazis were moving forward. The forces were unequal: 60 of their tanks against 20 of ours. The tank troops of Livshits let the Nazis come to within a range of 800 m and then began firing. The motorized rifle troops lay down in the open field.

The tank company of Sr Lt Yepikhin received the order to support the motorized rifle battalion. It counterattacked a group of Nazi tanks. In the heated engagement, the combat commander, the hero of Stalingrad, Boris Andreyevich Yepikhin was wounded. The Komsomol member Lt Oryabinskiy assumed command.

A short time thereafter the tanks safely reached the designated line. Several minutes later the Oryabinskiy company was already firing at the German tanks and infantry. When the enemy again brought up reserves and went over to the offensive, Lt Oryabinskiy received the mission of covering the maneuver of the motorized rifle battalion and coming out at elev. 220.2 where the company of Lt Fundov was heavily engaged.

The situation grew more and more complicated. A critical situation arose as the brigade's defenses could be broken before we had pulled the battalions back to a new line. We had to commit our reserve. The tank company and artillery battery located in the village of Khvostovka was shifted to the area of our observation post. The reserve was under the command of Lt V. A. Kharitonov. He had positioned his tanks as follows: two platoons along with the antitank battery were at a firing position near the observation post while the platoon of Lt S. N. Kravchenko was sent out on ambush. Kravchenko had scarcely reached the designated line when Nazi tanks appeared some 700 m away.

Our tank troops opened fire. One shell hit the turret of the nearest tank but it did not even halt. Another hit and again only a shower of sparks as the shells did not pierce the forward armor of the enemy tank....

In the meanwhile combat was heating up. One tank after another loosened up its cannon. Immediately there was a round and then another. Our tanks were catching fire. But the tank of the platoon commander had been able to take shelter in the ravine. Several anxious minutes followed. Suddenly we saw Lt Kharitonov emerging from the shelter, again approaching the Nazi tank and firing at its side. The Nazi vehicle halted and began to smoke. But the other enemy tanks slowly continued forward.

Around an hour had passed since the start of combat. By radio I got into contact with the commanders of the first echelon battalions. They reported: "Fire from the Nazis is very dense, further opposition without artillery and air support would cause unjustifiable losses and not provide positive results."

Having reported on the situation to the corps commander, I asked permission to take up another, better position for the defensive.

My proposal was confirmed by the general who reminded me:

"In no instance are the enemy tanks to be permitted to reach Belgorod!"

Having completed the call with the corps commander, I got into touch with the battalion commanders and gave them new missions. The tanks turned sharply and began to skirt the farm from the north and south. During this time a 2-km space had opened up between the Chufarov and Livshits battalions. The Nazi tanks drove into it obviously counting on splitting our battle formation. This time this was just what we needed!

The crucial moment had arrived. The chief of reconnaissance Nikityuk and I took our place in a foxhole. We closely watched the actions of our tanks and the enemy combat groups. Ten minutes, a half an hour passed but the telephone and radio were silent. The tone of the reports from observers was becoming evermore alarming.

From behind a hill, a kilometer from our observation post, we could suddenly hear new machine gun bursts, the clanking of track and Nazi tanks and submachine gunners broke into the glade. It was hard to estimate the number of attackers. There was at least a score of tanks and some 50 infantrymen....

After waiting a certain time, I called the Chufarov battalion by radio.

"Put an end to them!" said Chufarov excitedly to the company commander who was in ambush.

We could clearly see the two enemy tank groups moving from Borisovka. The scouts counted up to 30 vehicles in each.

The fierce battle lasted more than 2 hours. And our plan began to be carried out as the entire enemy division had been completely drawn into the pocket of fire prepared by us.

I called Chufarov:

"What is new in the situation, Siberia?"

I heard him giving commands to the driver: "Head right, right..." and then he answered my question:

"I have decided to attack the Nazi tanks at elev. 222 and break the enemy's pace. Permission requested."

"Permission granted."

We were climbing a hill and at that very moment I saw a group of our tanks break out of the ambush and move against the enemy. Later on, having made a brief stop, the tanks fired their cannons and again rushed forward. The enemy had only just spotted them. Breaking formation, the Nazis slowed down. But they did not succeed in carrying out the maneuver. The T-34s, after a new rush, opened fire.

Suddenly among the increasing noise of the vehicles there was a roar of a cannon volley from the third battalion. The Nazi tanks at the head of the wedge came to a halt.

The battalion of Sr Lt Semusenko, like a hurricane, unleashed the fire of its cannons at the enemy vehicles. Red lines of armor-piercing shells stretched toward the oncoming enemy tanks.

On the hills near Stanovoy our cannons roared unceasingly. Already ten enemy tanks were halted on the battlefield while five Nazi tanks were burning by the nearby ravine. The motorized rifle troops, supported by the tanks, with their fire had forced the Nazi enemy to hit the dirt.

For the enemy the vehicles in the first line had suffered the most and these probably were light tanks which played the role of reconnaissance in force. During this time the tanks of the second and subsequent lines caught up with those ahead and now the entire wedge was rolling toward our companies. But the Kotelnikovo guardsmen unflinchingly remained in their positions. All our battalions carried out volley fire from a halt and counterattacked from ambushes....

The Nazi tanks endeavored to outflank us to the south but there they encountered the artillery and tanks of the V Guards Tank Corps, and turning to the north encountered the volley fire of the tanks of the 18th Guards Tank Brigade and so continued to move between Borisovka and Tomarovka.

Late in the evening the corps commander ordered me:

"During the night carry out a regrouping and in the morning from the area of Pogrebnyaki, Stanovoy, Khvostovka, to the offensive. The mission is as before to occupy Borisovka. You will be given a heavy tank battalion from the 3d Guards Tank Brigade." The general spoke evenly and calmly....

The 18th Guards Tank Brigade was to launch an attack on Borisovka simultaneously with our brigade. We had been able to agree on everything with its commander, Col Gumenyuk.

It is impossible to forget with what joy we met the arriving aid of the command. Roaring past my observation post was a column of tanks and this was the battalion of Guards Maj I. Ya. Amelin from the 3d Guards Heavy Tank Brigade moving to the initial positions.

The morning of 16 March was gray and cold. From the hill one could see the entire brigade formed up ready to attack: the KV and T-34, the submachine gunners ready for combat. Here also were the cannons.

The mission was as follows: the Amelin tank troops were to attack the enemy which had captured elev. 221.2 and then take the western edge of Borisovka, the Chufarov and Livshits battalions were to attack the enemy on elev. 157.2 and take the southern edge of Borisovka. The motorized rifle troops were to advance behind the tanks. We left in the reserve the Semusenko tank battalion which was located to the west of the village of Pogrebnyaki.



At 0630 hours, with motors roaring, our tanks crossed the crests of the hills to the enemy positions. Immediately beyond the hill a broad valley opened up ahead of the tank troops. The strike of the brigade's battalions was aimed at the opposite side, where reconnaissance had discovered a group of 30 German tanks.

One after another the vehicles rushed to the hill. Breaking onto its top, the wheels of the tanks crushed the enemy machine guns and mortars into the falling ground. The submachine gunners showered the Nazis with fire. Judging from the first reports and personal observations, the attack had gone successfully. During 1 hour the battalions had advanced 4 km and certain subunits had even broken through to the bank of the Vorskly.

Collecting themselves, the Nazis went over to a counterattack. Some 30 Nazi tanks ganged up on the forward company. Out in front was a low-lying vehicle. Crouching, taking cover in the brush, it drew closer to the T-34s. At the moment when the Panther, and this was precisely what it was as we were to discover later, turned sideways to the road, a cannon roared out. A roar like a pile driver covered all the sounds and filled the river valley. The Panther caught fire. First the flame slowly covered the side and then moved to the engine and combat compartments and burst from the turret. Bright flames floated upwards.

Seemingly, the good start to the attack and the intrepidity on the offensive of the tank troops, the riflemen and the artillery troops would create conditions for the capture and complete defeat of the enemy in Borisovka. However, the Nazis quickly moved up reserves. And the farther our riflemen and tanks moved deep into the enemy positions, the stronger the enemy resistance was felt.

The Nazis were conducting solid artillery fire against the battle formations of the battalions. It was particularly hard for the crews of Sr Lt A. G. Gubin who had taken over for the wounded Sr Lt I. P. Goncharenko. Judging from everything, the Nazis intended to halt the advance of his company. The forces were unequal. Gubin's tanks, in maneuvering, knocked out two cannons and a mortar battery but were forced to retreat behind the hill.

We were hopeful that the brigade would be supported by aviation. But we had to get by with our own forces. I had already decided to commit my reserve to combat. However, at 0900 hours, our radio picked up a signal from the corps commander:

"Break off the attack, retreat to the initial position."

We went over to an active defensive. Maneuvering and using the high qualities of the T-34 tanks, the Kotelnikovo guardsmen decisively engaged the enemy. As a result, the enemy just on the sector of our brigade lost around 100 tanks, 50 vehicles with infantry and artillery and a large number of soldiers.(2)

Thus ended the battles at Borisovka. The counterattack initiated here by the III Kotelnikovo Guards Tank Corps reduced the enemy's rate of advance. However, it was not possible to halt the Nazi advance as numerical superiority



remained on the side of the Nazi troops. On the flanks the situation was sharply exacerbated as Belgorod and Tomarovka had fallen.

During the day of 18 March, red-starred IIs flew over the brigade's positions toward Belgorod. And some time later, the Stalingrad guardsmen of the 21st Army of Gen I. M. Chistyakov arrived to help us. All subsequent attempts by the Nazis to break through to Oboyan were driven off.

At Borisovka our tank troops for the first time employed new methods of fighting the Nazi tank columns headed by the much-praised Tigers and Panthers. This experience came in handy for the Soviet tank troops in the summer battles and in the great tank engagement at Prokhorovka.

#### FOOTNOTES

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## U.S. IMPERIALISM — THE MAIN SOURCE OF LOCAL WARS 1945-1985

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 86 (signed to press 24 Dec 85) pp 51-58

[Article by Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, Docent, Col G. V. Malinovskiy published under the rubric "Local Wars"]

[Text] The present international situation is characterized by a further increase in the aggressive policy of imperialism, and primarily American. "Imperialism does not wish to consider the political realities of the modern world," states the draft of the new CPSU Program. "In ignoring the will of sovereign peoples, it is endeavoring to deprive them of the right to choose for themselves a path of development and threatens their security. This is the main reason for the development of conflicts in various regions of the world."(1)

The sources of aggression and predatory wars lie in the very reactionary nature of imperialism. Due to its reactionary essence, imperialism has become the greatest suppressor of nations and the main source of aggressive wars. Imperialism alone since World War II has initiated or been involved in around 200 local wars and armed conflicts. In whatever region of the world the threat to reactionary, antipopular regimes occurs, the forces of imperialism, primarily American, are immediately sent here in order by military means to install an "order" which is to the liking of the monopolistic bourgeoisie and to defend the "vital interests" of those circles which gain from the exploitation of other countries and peoples from the plundering of their national wealth.

Historical experience shows that the policy of the U.S. ruling circles has always led to predatory wars. "...Almost at the very moment that the United States became a state, it became interventionist,"(2) states the editor of the American journal FOREIGN AFFAIRS, J. Chase. According to his estimates, from 1798 through 1945, the United States used its armed forces overseas some 159 times and in 73 cases without a declaration of war.(3)

The aggressiveness of American imperialism has risen even more since World War II. The wager on a policy of "from a position of strength" was made even in the first postwar years. "The world now sees us as a leader," stated the U.S. President H. Truman in 1947. "Events are forcing us to assume this role.

The strength of the United States means that the nation should maintain a military might corresponding to this responsibility."(4)

The given political situation has been reflected in all the U.S. military strategies of the postwar period including: "massive retaliation," "flexible response," "realistic deterrence," and "direct confrontation." And running through each of these is the idea of utilizing local wars to achieve foreign policy aims. U.S. imperialism, as was pointed out at the international forum of communists in 1969, "is finding it evermore difficult and dangerous to wager on the unleashing of a new world war. Under these conditions, the American ruling circles, without abandoning the preparations for such a war, is placing particular emphasis on local wars."(5) This is envisaged, in particular, in the concepts of "two and a half" and "one and a half" wars, various versions of "counterinsurgency warfare," "the Vietnamization of warfare," "geographic escalation," and so forth. In the United States, special formations have been organized for conducting local wars including the "Rapid Response Forces," and the corresponding moral-political and psychological preparation of the army personnel for such wars is being carried out.(6) The experience of the postwar period shows that the United States holds the leading place among the other imperialist powers in terms of involvement in local wars. An analysis of 179 such wars and military conflicts in 1945-1985 shows that the share of U.S. involvement in them in percentage terms is 48 percent, including 13 for direct participation and 35 for indirect.(8) Here this index has been constantly growing. While in 1945-1960, the share of U.S. involvement in wars and conflicts was 39 percent, in 1971-1984, already 59 percent, confirming the growing role of American imperialism as a source of local wars. At the same time it is important to emphasize that with the development of the world revolutionary process and the change in the balance of forces on the international scene in favor of socialism, one can note a trend for a decline in the share of direct U.S. involvement in aggression and an increase in indirect (see Diagram 1). But this in no way reduces the American role in the outbreak of military conflicts.

After 1945, U.S. imperialism in one form or another was involved in various categories of wars: in 70 percent of all wars against the socialist countries, almost in 50 percent of the colonial and neocolonial wars, more than 60 percent of the civil wars, 30 percent of the wars between the developing countries and in as many armed actions of separatists (see Diagram 2).

In intervening into wars between the developing countries, in the civil wars and separatist actions, the United States has always supported the reactionary forces. It has participated in wars and conflicts in all regions of the world: approximately in one-half of the wars in Asia and Africa and two-thirds of the wars in Central and South America and the adjacent waters (see Diagram 3). Here the increased number of military actions with U.S. involvement has been accompanied by a broadening of their geographic limits. Recently, the United States more and more has been intervening in the military conflicts in Africa and Central America. This is persuasively shown from the data given in the table. This is the general picture of U.S. involvement in wars and conflicts since World War II.

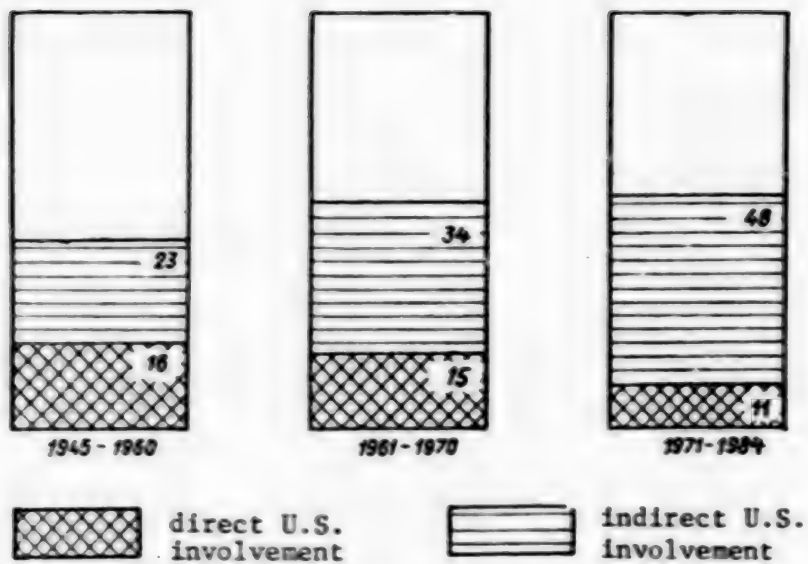


Diagram 1

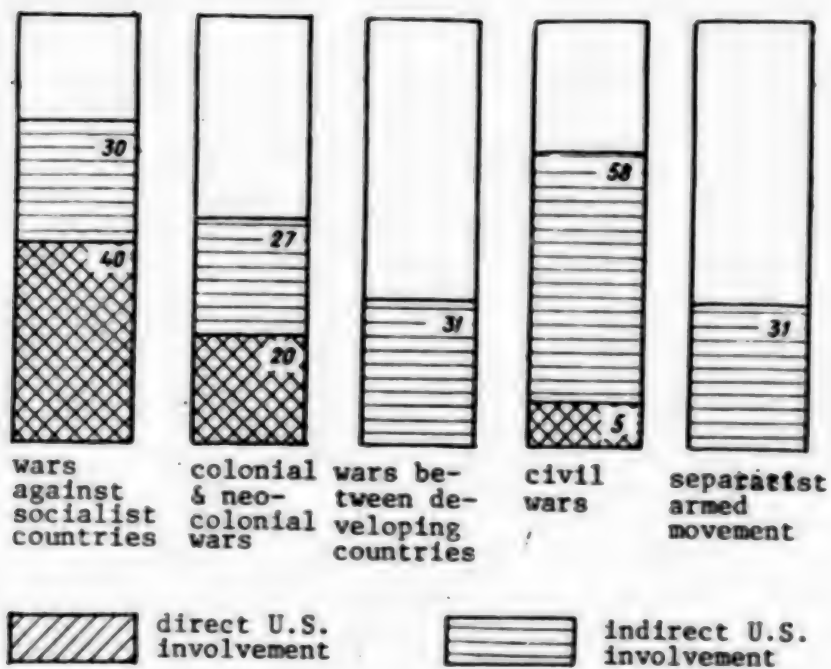


Diagram 2



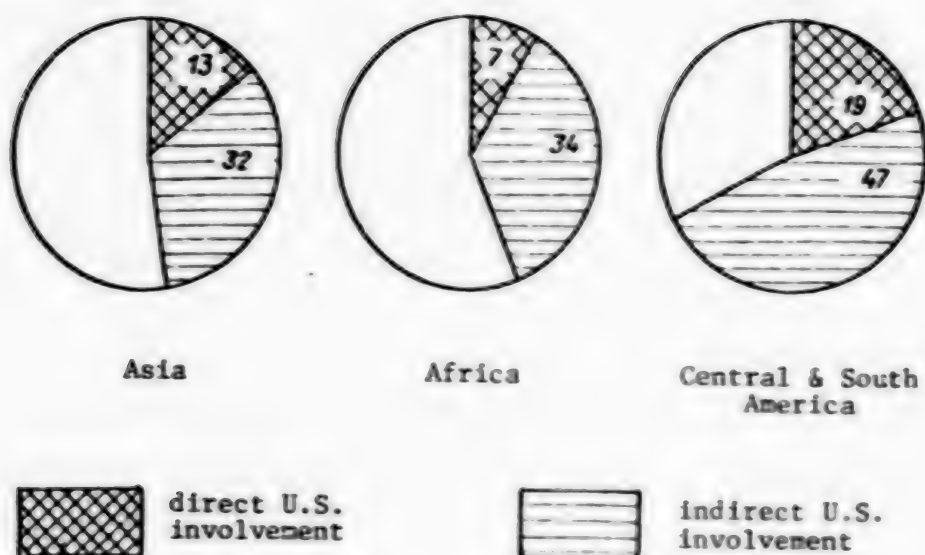


Diagram 3

The United States has directly used its armed forces in more than one-quarter (27 percent) of all instances of its involvement in wars and conflicts. For unleashing aggression against sovereign states, the United States has usually created some formal pretext which "justifies" its military actions. Thus, in August 1964, for escalating the "particular" war already being waged by the United States in South Vietnam and for starting outright aggression against North Vietnam, the Americans created a provocative action in the territorial waters of North Vietnam (the "Gulf of Tonkin Incident"). Later on, the American Congress adopted a resolution (a draft of which was ready by 25 May 1964) sanctioning the complete freedom of action of the government for taking any "retaliatory measures."

Table

U.S. Involvement in Local Wars and Military Conflicts in 1945-1985  
(by Regions and Periods, in Percent)

Years	Asia	Africa	Central & South America
1945-1960	40	15	58
1961-1970	58	43	59
1971-1985	53	57	90

Before the overthrow of the legitimate government in Guatemala in 1945, Washington initiated rumors that this country had purchased aircraft to "threaten the security of the Western Hemisphere." (9) At present, the United States is endeavoring in a similar manner to "justify" the preparations for aggression against Nicaragua. The immediate pretext for American aggression against Grenada was the Washington-inspired "request" of certain East Caribbean countries to participate in an invasion of Grenada supposedly in the aim of restoring "legitimacy, order and governmental institutions" resulting from the "dangerous vacuum of power" which had formed there with the murder of the leader of the Grenadan government, Bishop. The murder, as later became learned, had been organized by the CIA upon orders from the White House. It would be possible to give many analogous pretexts for aggression provoked by Washington itself.

In initiating local wars, the American imperialists have often overtly employed their forces. An example of this was the U.S. aggression against North Korea and the Indochinese countries, and the interventions into Lebanon and the Dominican Republic. In intervening in the civil wars in Greece and China, America used its armed forces for suppressing the revolutionary forces and supporting the reactionary regimes. In a number of instances the United States has initially employed armies of the countries dependent upon them or armed detachments of various sorts of mercenaries, supporting their actions with aviation and naval forces, while later on American interventionists themselves joined in the combat actions. For example, against the Patriotic Front of Laos, the United States initially used Saigon and Thailand troops but beginning in 1964, reinforced their actions with American forces. In organizing and supporting Israeli aggression against Lebanon in 1982, the United States later became a direct participant.

More than one-half (57 percent) of U.S. aggression was of a coalition nature. An analysis of the composition of such coalitions indicates that the involvements of other countries in armed actions was needed by Washington for covering its involvement ions. The Chufarov and Livshits battalions were to assign one tank company each as ambushes in the area of Stanovoy and along the Belgorod Highway. The remaining forces were to hold up the Nazis as long as possible and then according to a special command outflank the line defended by the Semusenko battalion. The Nazis, believing in their success, would rush into the breach and immediately fall on our antitank line occupied by the five tank companies and antitank battery. The enemy would end up in a pocket of fire, or that was our intention. But still this had to be carried out.

The Nazi attack commenced, as we had assumed, with a massed dive-bomber attack. Initially, dark spots of airplanes could be scarcely seen on the horizon. Soon thereafter the silhouettes of the Junkers became distinguishable. They flew in a triangle and so low that the yellow wing tips could be clearly seen. As soon as the last Junkers disappeared, the Nazi artillery began firing. Then the enemy tanks appeared. I realized that the enemy was concentrating its main efforts opposite the 168th Battalion. It was endeavoring to drive a wedge between it and the 167th Tank Battalion. I immediately switched the radio to transmitting.

"Siberian! Donetsk! Strengthen your fire on the flanks!" I ordered Chufarov and Livshits.

In the meanwhile, having moved up forces and taking cover behind the artillery fire and dive-bomber attacks, the Nazis were moving forward. The forces were unequal: 60 of their tanks against 20 of ours. The tank troops of Livshits let the Nazis come to within a range of 800 m and then began firing. The motorized rifle troops lay down in the open field.

The tank company of Sr Lt Yepikhin received the order to support the motorized rifle battalion. It counterattacked a group of Nazi tanks. In the heated engagement, the combat commander, the hero of Stalingrad, Boris Andreyevich Yepikhin was wounded. The Komsomol member Lt Oryabinskiy assumed command.

A short time thereafter the tanks safely reached the designated line. Several minutes later the Oryabinskiy company was already firing at the German tanks and infantry. When the enemy again brought up reserves and went over to the offensive, Lt Oryabinskiy received the mission of covering the maneuver of the motorized rifle battalion and coming out at elev. 220.2 where the company of Lt Fundov was heavily engaged.

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## TRUTH AND FICTION ON THE 1939 SOVIET-GERMAN NONAGGRESSION PACT

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 86 (signed to press 24 Dec 85) pp 59-65

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col A. S. Yakushevskiy published under the rubric "Against the Bourgeois Falsifiers of History"]

[Text] In 1985, the Soviet Union and the entire world widely celebrated the 40th anniversary of the victory over German Naziism and Japanese militarism. The reactionary circles in the West have endeavored to use this historical event for initiating a new anti-Soviet and antisocialist propaganda campaign. They have made a great effort to whitewash imperialism, to lift from it the responsibility for the outbreak of World War II and to shift all of this to the Soviet Union.

One of the objects of anti-Soviet speculation in imperialist propaganda has been the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact of 23 August 1939. The fact of the conclusion of the pact more and more intensely is being used to slander the prewar policy of the USSR and to spread doubt as to the sincerity of those peace-loving initiatives which are being initiated by our country at present.

Bourgeois historians and writers have written scores of books about the 1939 Soviet-German pact. Hundreds of articles have been devoted to it in journals, newspapers and encyclopedias.(1) The pact was subjected to particularly malicious attacks by bourgeois propaganda during the days of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the victory over German Naziism. Many Western television and radio stations broadcast repeatedly about it. In all these books, articles and broadcasts, the pact, as a rule, was presented from anti-Soviet positions as a "conspiracy against peace." The stir raised around it has been used as a smokescreen behind which the ideologists of imperialism have endeavored to conceal the true guilty parties for initiating World War II.

The most widespread in bourgeois propaganda is the slanderous assertion that the Soviet-German pact was a "major event" which, in the expression of the English historian M. McCauley, made "war in Europe inevitable."(2) In the words of W. Paul (West Germany), Stalin, in endeavoring supposedly to "expand his territory," concluded the pact with Nazi Germany, thus "permitting Hitler to start the war."(3) An analogous viewpoint has been defended by B. Stegeman in the second volume of the official West German 10-volume work(4) "The German



Reich and World War II" as written by the Directorate of Military History Research of the Bundeswehr. This historian has written that "the conclusion of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 23 August 1939 undoubtedly was the decisive factor" which made it possible for Hitler to attack Poland and begin World War II. (5)

All these authors usually do not bother searching for the proof to back up their anti-Soviet position. They merely limit themselves to making unfounded accusations against the Soviet Union over the question of the nonaggression pact and put forward unsound suppositions. Thus, the American historian S. Morris has stated that the documents and materials in the possession of bourgeois researchers are supposedly insufficient to establish whether the Soviet Union in signing the pact with Germany was guided by "motives of self-defense" or was endeavoring "intentionally to provoke a war." (6)

The positing of the question on such a plane is clearly of a provocative nature. There are completely sufficient published documentary materials which irrefutably show that the Soviet Union was working steadily for peace. The Soviet pact with Germany was not aimed against the interests of any other state and, of course, could not provoke a war. The Soviet government resorted to a conclusion of a pact only after all opportunities had been exhausted for establishing a system of collective security capable of halting Nazi aggression. Soviet efforts encountered a reticence to collaborate from the Western imperialist powers and primarily England, the United States and France the ruling circles of which were blinded by hate for the Soviet state.

In being guided by anti-Soviet aspirations, these powers actually carried out a policy of encouraging the aggressors. They did not prevent Japanese aggression against China and accepted the annexation of Ethiopia by Italy. They allowed Germany to annex the Saarland, to introduce troops into the Rhineland which had been demilitarized under the Versailles Treaty and then carry out the "Anschluss" of Austria. The 1938 Munich Agreement was the apex of conniving with the aggressors and according to this the Nazis were to be allowed to dismember Czechoslovakia. By concessions the Western powers endeavored to impel Nazi Germany and its allies in the Anticomintern Pact to attack the USSR. But the Nazi rulers were first organizing an attack on the European capitalist countries, thereby planning to secure their rear in a war against the Soviet Union.

Profoundly slanderous are the assertions by bourgeois falsifiers that in the 1930's the Soviet Union did not endeavor to strengthen universal peace, it did not struggle to prevent a war and in its foreign policy pursued purely egoistic goals. Such a conclusion, for example, has been drawn by the American historian J. Hochman in his book "The Soviet Union and the Failure of Collective Security" published in the United States in 1984. In examining Soviet foreign policy from the time the USSR entered the League of Nations in 1934 to 1939, the author asserted that the Soviet Union "actually" and "seriously" was not in favor of establishing a European security system or developing Allied relations with France and the other Western powers, it avoided any "firm military obligations" under the Soviet-French Mutual Aid Treaty signed in 1935 and endeavored to "collaborate" with Nazi Germany and this, supposedly, led to the concluding of the nonaggression pact with it. (7)

The West German historian W. Paul in the book "Field Camp" has also written about the "desire" of the Soviet government in 1939 to conclude an alliance with Germany.

All these assertions run contrary to reality. In the difficult and tense international situation of the 1930's, the Soviet Union made every effort to isolate the aggressors and to ensure peace by collective efforts.

At the end of 1933, our party's Central Committee adopted an historic decree on initiating a struggle to establish an effective collective security system in Europe in the aims of preserving peace and preventing aggression. The collective security system which was proposed in the first time in the history of international relations by the Communist Party and the Soviet government met the interests of all freedom-loving peoples which were threatened by Nazi aggression.

In accord with this decree the Soviet government worked out a full-scale plan for establishing a collective security system in Europe. The plan was approved by the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and included a whole series of specific proposals. In particular, the Soviet Union expressed agreement to enter the League of Nations under certain conditions and to conclude regional agreements with France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, Finland and other states on mutual protection against aggression by Germany.

In 1935, the Soviet Union signed mutual aid treaties against aggression with France and Czechoslovakia. But, unfortunately, the efforts of the Soviet side were not supported by the governments of these states as they did not strengthen but rather undermined the bases of their treaties with the Soviet Union. According to a statement by the German ambassador, the Czechoslovak President E. Benes openly told him that it was not worth taking seriously the obligations of the Czech treaty with the Soviet Union.<sup>(8)</sup> And from the end of 1937, Paris also began to view the Soviet-French treaty as a lamentable interference which would be desirable to escape from as quickly as possible. This was largely aided by the position of England, the ruling circles of which were against cooperation with the Soviet Union for resisting Nazi aggression. London did not miss the opportunity to remind Paris that Moscow was not a "dependable ally."

The Western countries seriously and actually did not want to establish Allied relations with the USSR, while the Soviet government showed sincere interest in creating a European-wide collective security system and was ready to establish military cooperation with them. This readiness was evidenced also in the course of the Anglo-French-Soviet talks which started in March 1939 and lasted until the last 10 days of August.

At the talks the Soviet Union made a maximum of effort to prevent Nazi aggression. The foundation for this would be a treaty between the USSR, England and France on mutual aid and based upon an equality of obligations and effective measures taken to check aggression in any region of Europe. The conditions for such a treaty were proposed by the Soviet Union. The unswerving determination of the USSR to reach agreement with England and

France in ensuring collective security was particularly apparent at the special talks of the three-power military missions which commenced on 12 August 1939 in Moscow. The Soviet side presented a plan which had been worked out in detail and according to which the USSR promised to field against an aggressor in Europe 136 divisions, 5,000 heavy guns, 9,000-10,000 tanks and 5,000-5,500 combat aircraft. The plan envisaged three specific versions of joint actions by the armed forces of the USSR, England and France.(9) It showed the sincere desire of the Soviet Union to conclude a binding equal agreement on military collaboration with England and France.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, the English and French governments in the talks with the USSR played a double game. The agreement for the talks was a change only in form and not in the essence of their policy. The Western powers proposed versions of agreements which would expose the Soviet Union to German attack but did not bind them by definite obligations to the USSR and at the same time would have provided them with military aid from the Soviet Union in that event that Germany, in spite of their desires, move not to the east but rather to the west.

In ignoring historical facts, the ideologists of imperialism have asserted that in 1939, England and France "sincerely" wanted to reach agreement with the USSR on a joint struggle against Naziism but were unable to do this due to the "treachery" of the Soviet Union which supposedly committed "betrayal" of them by concluding the pact with Germany. "The talks which in the summer of 1939 began between the English and Soviet governments," wrote the retired English general F. Maclean about the Anglo-French-Soviet talks, "from the very outset were doomed to failure. The Russians for several months had secretly been talking with the Germans."(10)

In actuality, everything was quite the reverse. Not the Soviet Union, but rather England was maintaining secret contacts with the Nazis while its government sent its representatives to Moscow for conducting military talks with the USSR. England took the initiative of establishing contacts with Germany. On 26 November 1928, as was learned after the war, V. Hesse who officially held the post of the manager of the bureau of the German Telegraph Agency DND in London and simultaneously was the press advisor of the German Embassy in England, informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Ribbentrop in Berlin: "A trusted agent of Chamberlain has asked me to probe the ground.... The English side urgently wants to take a further step in order to clearly continue the line of the Munich Agreement and open the way to a joint Anglo-German agreement on recognizing the main spheres of influence."(11) This person was the close advisor of Chamberlain, H. Wilson, who later took an active part in talks with representatives of Nazi Germany. The English proposal was carefully reviewed in Berlin. The German governmental official for special assignments H. Wohltat came to London for conducting the secret talks.

Other secret channels were also used for establishing contacts between the German and English representatives. Among these one might put the invitation of Goring to England for talks and who after Hitler was the second person in the German leadership. This was carried out through an agent of the English



Intelligence Service, Sydney Cotton. But the signing of the Soviet-German Pact on 23 August ended the plans for Goring's trip to England.

Although the Anglo-German talks were conducted secretly, the existing observations and announcements were sufficient for the Soviet government to understand the plans of the English ruling circles. In such a situation the USSR could not count on an alliance with England and the junior partner France in collaborating against Nazi aggression.

Also completely groundless are the fabrications of the falsifiers that the Soviet Union supposedly was trying to collaborate not with the Western powers but rather with Nazi Germany. As the facts show, in the second half of the 1930's, the USSR responded negatively to the German proposals on economic and political questions.

The Nazi leadership in 1939 feared the establishing of a European-wide collective security system, as this could prevent it from carrying out the aggressive plans it was hatching. It decided for a certain time to carry out vis-a-vis the USSR "a policy of even-handedness and economic collaboration." (12) At the beginning of 1939, the German government proposed the conclusion of a trade agreement with the Soviet Union. The tone of the German press vis-a-vis the USSR changed noticeably. Representatives of governmental bodies in Berlin in talks with Soviet diplomats began very cautiously to raise the question of improving German-Soviet relations. Thus, on 17 May 1939, the prominent official from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, J. Schnurre, met with the Soviet charge d'affaires in Germany, G. A. Astakhov, and endeavored to discuss with him "the subject of improving Soviet-German relations." (13) On 20 May the German ambassador in Moscow, W. Schulenburg, raised with the USSR People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, V. M. Molotov, the question of resuming the economic talks. It was pointed out to the ambassador that due to the tension in the political atmosphere in the relations between the USSR and Germany, the Soviet government did not consider it possible to conduct talks on broadening trade and economic ties.

Regardless of the negative response from the Soviet government, the German side continued probing on the possibility of talks to broaden ties. Until mid-August 1939, while there was still some hope of concluding the Anglo-French-Soviet agreements, the Soviet government left all the "feelers" from the German side unanswered.

It must be emphasized that the collapse of the talks which had started in Moscow between the military missions of England, France and the USSR had been predetermined by the position taken by the governments of the Western powers. As became known from the documents made public at the end of the 1960's from the British State Archives, the English Imperial Defense Committee which at a session on 2 August 1939 examined the tasks of the English delegation in Moscow, recommended that it "conduct the talks slowly and cautiously" and discuss military plans "on a purely hypothetical basis." (14) The English Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. Halifax, in recognizing that the head of the English delegation, Adm R. Drax, lacked the powers to conclude any important agreements, with concealed satisfaction told his cabinet colleagues: "The



military talks will draw out infinitely and in this manner we will gain time and best escape from the difficult situation into which we have fallen."(15)

Confronted with the lack of results from the Anglo-French-Soviet talks, our country was confronted with the necessity of repelling possible aggression simultaneously from two powerful imperialist powers: Germany in Europe and Japan in Asia under the conditions of military-political isolation. The years-long policy of the Western powers of "appeasing" the fascist aggressors was designed approximately for the same situation.

The Soviet government had to decide how to avoid the trap in which the creators of the Munich policy wanted to ensnare it. The USSR was confronted with the harsh necessity of unilaterally putting off the time of Germany's attack on its territory. The interests of the workers of all countries demanded the preservation of the world's first socialist state. In the developing difficult situation, the Soviet government was forced to conclude a nonaggression pact with Germany as proposed by Berlin. In taking this compelled step, the Communist Party and the Soviet government were guided by political realism and by a responsible and precise consideration of objective conditions.

At present, bourgeois propaganda has in every possible way condemned the Soviet government for utilizing the contradictions which arose in the world and has declared as "amoral" the step undertaken by the Soviet government in the aim of removing the nation from under the blow threatening it. At the same time, all the aggressive actions of the Nazis, while they did not directly threaten the Western powers and maintained a general direction toward the east, against the USSR, are approved by the reactionary authors. This is clearly a prejudiced approach to history.

The conclusion of a nonaggression pact with Germany by the Soviet Union in the arising situation conformed fully to the principles of proletarian internationalism and to the class interests of the international communist movement, as it was aimed at preserving peace and strengthening the defense capability of the first socialist state in history. "Precisely in the interests of 'strengthening the tie' with international socialism," V. I. Lenin taught, "the socialist fatherland must defend itself without fail. The tie with international socialism is broken by the one who would show a flippant attitude toward the defense of the nation in which the proletariat has already been victorious."(16) Having concluded the nonaggression pact with Germany in the difficult international situation of the summer of 1939, the Soviet Union thwarted the attempt of both imperialist groupings to join forces against the world's first socialist state and avoided involvement in war in the extremely unfavorable situation of that period. Although the pact did not free the USSR from the threat of Nazi aggression, it gave the opportunity to gain time for further strengthening the nation's defense capability, that is, for developing the military-industrial base, for reorganizing the work of the defense industry and for increasing the size and raising the combat readiness of the Armed Forces. History has confirmed the correctness of the course set by the Soviet Union. Precisely the might of the Soviet socialist state played the decisive role in the defeat of Naziism

during the years of World War II and in saving mankind from the brown pestilence.

It is worthy of note that the communists and the leading workers of all countries immediately correctly judged the actions of the Soviet Union and saw in the nonaggression pact signed by it an important step in the struggle against Naziism and for the interests of the workers of the entire world. "The fascist liars," stated a pamphlet which on 25-20 August 1939 was illegally distributed by German communists and was signed by the "Southern German German People's Front," "completely distort the essence of the nonaggression pact. They have turned facts upside down.... The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is a consistent policy of peace, a policy aimed at thwarting the Nazi warmongers, a policy meeting the interests of the workers of the entire world.... This policy has not undergone any changes.... The Soviet Union has presented a harsh lesson to Chamberlain and Daladier. It has put an end to their plans directed against the USSR."(17)

After the signing of the pact, the USSR continued to remain loyal to its anti-Nazi course. The Soviet government recognized that it could not count on the pact as a salvation from German aggression. It was clear that as soon as the Nazis felt themselves sufficiently strong, they would turn against the USSR with all their might. In the ratification of this pact at a session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, it was emphasized that it "cannot weaken our vigilance."(18)

In turn, the Nazi leadership viewed the nonaggression pact with the USSR as merely a "temporary maneuver." Immediately after the signing of the pact, as was pointed out by Hitler's Air Force aide, N. Below, in his memoirs, the Fuhrer, although not saying so openly, definitely let it be known that "all his foreign policy as before was subordinate to just one goal, to the defeat of Bolshevism" and, in the viewpoint of Hitler, "all of Europe, particularly England, should be interested in this."(19) In a talk with Mussolini in March 1940, Hitler emphasized that the pact with the USSR was only a "tactical maneuver" which he needed until "the gaining of a free hand in the West makes it possible to resume the struggle against Bolshevism in the East within the 'eastern program'."(20)

The Soviet-German nonaggression pact caused and still causes furious anger among the reactionary circles of the West as it disrupted the anti-Soviet plans of international imperialism as well as due to the fact that the USSR used this pact for strengthening its defense might and created conditions for the subsequent victory over the forces of Naziism and militarism. The spread of untruths about the pact and the aims of the Soviet Union has been widely used by bourgeois propaganda for slandering socialism, for misleading public opinion in the capitalist countries and for creating favorable grounds there for carrying out the aggressive plans of imperialism.

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## ACHIEVING SURPRISE IN COURSE OF PREPARING, LANDING AMPHIBIOUS FORCES

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[Article by Doctor of Naval Sciences, Prof, Capt 1st Rank (Ret) K. V. Penzin and Candidate of Historical Sciences, Capt 2d Rank V. D. Dotsenko; the article was written from the experience of World War II]

[Text] In the course of World War II, in the aim of capturing coastal beachheads and islands as well as exploiting success on an offensive on maritime sectors, the belligerents rather frequently used amphibious forces. In preparing and landing them, a significant role was given to achieving surprise which made it possible to achieve maximum results with a smaller expenditure of men, weapons and time.

During the period of preparing for landing, particular attention was given to ensuring the secrecy of planning. For these purposes the officers and rank-and-file participating in the elaboration of the plans were usually isolated from the remaining staff personnel. The group involved in planning the operation of the invasion of Sicily (July 1943) worked under conditions which excluded any contacts with persons not involved in working out the plan. The group was in a building that was fenced off with barbed wire and constantly guarded.(1) In preparing for the Normandy Landing, Gen Eisenhower on 23 February 1944 sent out to his subordinate commanders a special order on keeping the plan for the forthcoming operation a secret. This provided for careful security for persons acquainted with the details of the plan. They were prohibited from participating in reconnaissance and flights over the areas of the forthcoming landing, if this was not extremely urgent. Persons guilty of breaking the secret were liable to severe punishment.(2)

Secrecy for the overall plan during the planning stage was also ensured by limiting the number of persons involved in working out the plans and by giving them narrow assignments. Correspondence was categorically prohibited and strict censor limitations were introduced. Some 1.5-2 months before the start of the Normandy Operation, the personnel to be involved in it were deprived of contact, including by mail, with their families.

Great attention was given to surprise and deception. For this purpose a number of measures was planned and carried out. A good deal of importance was

given to working out special plans for disinforming the enemy. A detail plan was drawn up in preparing for the North African Operation (November 1942). The measures contained in it met the following overall plan: to conceal from friendly troops and from the enemy the aim of the preparatory measures for a major landing operation; to mislead the German Command on the activity of the Allied forces in the Gibraltar area; to avoid any actions which could cause the enemy to take retaliatory measures to strengthen defenses in the area designated for the landing; to impede in every possible way the enemy from gaining valuable information for it and to direct its intelligence along a false path.

Special bodies set up under the staffs for planning one or another landing operation in a majority of instances were concerned with working out the special plans. In the course of preparing for landing troops on Sicily, surprise and deception groups were widely established. Under the navy staff in the western part of the Mediterranean there was a "special operations" department.

Special staffs were also organized for planning combat on spurious sectors. Such a staff "functioned" during the period of preparing for the Normandy Landing. Its activities seemed so dependable that even the persons working on it were confused. They did not suspect their real role of being a lure for German intelligence.(3)

Special disinformation units were also organized and these carried out the planned measures to mislead the enemy. One such unit in preparing for the Sicily Operation was the "Detachment A." It included three subunits up to a company strong. The personnel of these subunits chiefly made, set up and maintained dummy targets in proper working order and also built various objects which could be seen from the air.(4)

In the interests of surprise and deception they widely carried out such measures as: increasing the combat activities of aviation and navy ships over the entire theater; conducting reconnaissance on a broad front; using a portion of the forces to conduct feints on secondary sectors; the dispersion of forces assigned for the landing over different ports and bases; the isolating of the areas for concentrating and preparing the ship forces, the troop formations and units from the civilian population and the declaring of these regions to be closed zones. There was the temporary renaming of the troop units and ships. Thus, in preparing for the landing of an amphibious force in Norway (1940) in special instructions from the German Command it was ordered that the German ships be camouflaged as English ones with the use of their flags and names (the light cruiser "Koln" was temporarily to be the air defense cruiser "Cairo," the "Konigsberg" was to be the "Calcutta" and so forth).

Great importance was given to signals deception and security. These were carried out by simulating the location of men and weapons in a previous area, by continuing the spurious operation of the transmitters on the wave length and with the call numbers of the departed formations and so forth. However, in a number of instances, routine in the measures carried out for deception often alerted the enemy and gave away the preparations for the operation. In

the course of preparing for the Philippine Landing Operation (October 1944), in particular, the American Command sharply curtailed radio traffic, introduced new codes and ciphers and shifted to alternate frequencies. Having analyzed the signals intelligence data concerning these changes and having compared them with analogous actions which occurred previously, the Japanese Command concluded that the Americans were preparing for a new operation.

The danger of giving away the place and time of the forthcoming amphibious landing increased significantly in the stage of deploying the forces. In the aim of camouflage the ships and vessels as well as the troops comprising the landing force were spread out. If geographic conditions permitted, the deployment routes as well as the points where the men and weapons were temporarily were chosen outside the operational radius of enemy reconnaissance aircraft. For example, prior to the start of the Norway Operation (April 1940), the German ships were located at numerous bases of the North and Baltic Seas. The Japanese troops which were to be landed on the Philippines and the Malacca Peninsula (December 1941) were readied for the landing operation on the China Coast, French Indochina and Hainan Island.

Precautionary and secrecy measures were also planned in embarking the landing forces. For this, they made maximum use of darkness, bad weather conditions, inactivity by enemy reconnaissance and so forth.

The crossing at sea was the most difficult in ensuring secrecy of the landing force. During this time, strict observance of the rules for utilizing radios assumed particular importance. Thus, in the Normandy Operation complete radio silence was observed during the crossing at sea. Even a sinking vessel was not permitted to use the airwaves.

The landing forces at sea were camouflaged as trade convoys and also followed spurious and changing courses. Such a seemingly simple method still made it possible at times to mislead the enemy. In landing at Anzio and Nettunio (Italy, January 1944), the Allied landing forces for concealing the actual course for a certain time steamed south out of the Bay of Naples and with the onset of darkness returned to the landing area. In the Sicily Operation two cover groups were established and these, in carrying out feints, distracted the enemy's attention from the landing forces. Thus, the group X maneuvered in the Ionian Sea feigning a landing on the Greek coast. The group Z headed toward the western part of Sicily.

In the Normandy Operation, the Allies conducted two major feints in the region of Boulogne and Saint Malo. These involved scores of ships, launches and barges over which the aviation dropped metal strips which on the radar screens created the appearance of a fighter cover. The deceptive measures attracted the attention of the enemy coastal defenses. Some 3 hours before dawn, the German night fighters scrambled and began hunting for the phantom Allied aircraft. At the same time, not one aircraft appeared over the landing forces heading to the Baie de la Seine where the landing was planned. (5)

The achieving of surprise was also aided by the successful choice of the landing points. Often these were set in less convenient but more unexpected areas for the enemy. In the Sicily and Normandy Operations, the amphibious



forces were landed where well equipped ports and piers were lacking. The enemy viewed these areas as unsuitable for the landing of major amphibious forces and did not expect a threat from the sea here. In the course of the Okinawa Operation (April 1945), the Americans used the most convenient southern beaches of the island solely for feints. The west island coast which was not at all suitable for landing operations was chosen as the main landing area.

The start of the landing of the assault (or forward) detachments usually was set for a predawn hour in order to use the remaining darkness for a covert approach of the landing forces to the coast.

The surprise factor was significantly strengthened, particularly in landing the force on undeveloped areas of the coastline by employing new equipment. In the Sicily Operation, a new feature was the use of large tank landing craft (with a capacity of 20-25 medium tanks each), infantry landing craft (with a capacity of 250 men with their weapons), small tank landing craft and amphibious vehicles of the "duck" type.<sup>(6)</sup> Ready ahead of time were the pontoon bridges designed for crossing the underwater bar off the coast of Sicily. Also effective was the use of special devices which connected the tank landing vessels with several landing craft in unloading combat equipment and personnel on the coast across the underwater bar.

In the Normandy Operation the use of artificial ports by the Anglo-Americans was a real surprise for the German antilanding defenses. One of them (for unloading small ships) was old vessels which were sunk close to one another. The use of this equipment significantly increased the landing pace and made it possible to carry out the landing with comparatively high waves.<sup>(7)</sup> In unloading combat equipment from the large tank landing vessels which were unable under the shallow water conditions to come close to shore, new self-propelled rafts were manufactured and these consisted of steel pontoons and possessed a significant cargo capacity. Several hundred tanks were equipped with special canvas floats for reaching shore by floating. In truth, this innovation under the conditions of a heavy sea did not prove effective.

Thus, as the experience of World War II showed, the achieving of surprise was possible in strictly observing secrecy, particularly in the stage of working out the combat plans. A substantial role was also played by precise planning and the successive implementation of measures for camouflage and disinforming the enemy. Also effective were the feint operations as well as the use of new equipment.

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ARMY COMMANDER 1st RANK I. P. UBOREVICH

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[Article by Col (Ret) D. V. Pankov and Candidate of Historical Sciences D. D. Pankov and published under the rubric "Military History Dates"; the article was written on the occasion of the 90th birthday of I. P. Uborevich]

[Text] The life of the prominent military leader Iyeronim Petrovich Uborevich(1) is a vivid example of totally dedicated service of the motherland and the cause of the socialist revolution.

The son of poor Lithuanian peasants, the communist I. P. Uborevich, welcomed Great October in the trenches of World War I. In the crucible of the commenced Civil War his generalship art grew, his character was forged and the style of a Soviet military leader of a major scale was produced. In 1918, he commanded a regiment and a year later was directing the combat actions of an army. The party sent I. P. Uborevich to the most crucial sectors of the front. He participated in defeating the Anglo-American interventionists in the North, the Denikin divisions at the very center of Russia and in the South, the Wrangel troops in Northern Tauria and the Donets Basin, the Petlyura and Makhnov bands in the Ukraine, the Antonov troops in the Tambov forests, the bands of Bulak-Bulakhovich in Belorussia and the remnants of the White Guard in the Far East.

The generalship art of I. P. Uborevich was clearly apparent in the leadership of the 14th, 9th and 13th Armies. "Under the experienced leadership of Comrade Uborevich, the troops of the 14th Army have sealed their combat work by taking...major tactical and strategic points," commented the order of the commander of the Southwestern Front, A. I. Yegorov. "The brilliant results have been achieved by the army's troops undoubtedly due to the energetic and talented leadership of Uborevich."(2)

For skillful leadership in the battles against the interventionists and White Guards, I. P. Uborevich received three Orders of the Red Banner and an honorary revolutionary weapon.

After the end of the Civil War, Iyeronim Petrovich held a number of leading positions in the Soviet Armed Forces. In being a proponent of progressive

theory and having enormous experience in troop leadership, he devoted a great deal of attention to combat training, he boldly raised new problems involved with improving the personnel training methods and the technical rearming of the army and worked for their implementation. His articles published on the pages of the journals KRASNAYA ARMIYA NA VOSTOKE and VOYNA I REVOLYUTSIYA are devoted to the questions of troop training. In 1928, with his active involvement, the training-procedural aid "Podgotovka komsostava RKKA (starshego i vysshego). Polevyye poyezdki, uskorennyye voyennyye igry i vykhody v pole" [The Training of Command Personnel of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] (Senior and Superior). Field Trips, Accelerated Field Games and Field Exercises] was published.

I. P. Uborevich gave primary importance to tactical training and demanded the use of new forms in troop training. Here Iyeronim Petrovich was the opponent of any routine. He advised, for example, to select the participants of military games in such a manner that an infantryman would play the role of an artillery man, a staff worker would command a unit, a line commander would get some experience on a staff. I. P. Uborevich considered it very important that the political workers possessed experience in command positions.

Iyeronim Petrovich gave serious attention to the officers who had just arrived from the academy. For him it was a rule to conduct brief assemblies with them and the program for these included demonstration and practical exercises on weapons training using a revolver, the light and medium machine gun, nighttime firing, crossing an assault course with the throwing of grenades, battle drill exercises and the solving of short problems. The academy graduates learned to conduct exercises and simultaneously became acquainted with the demands of their commander.

I. P. Uborevich was constantly concerned that everything new coming from the experience of the exercises and field trips was introduced into the troops. In the all-arms exercises conducted under his leadership, they thoroughly examined the employment of tank formations, they tested the effectiveness of massed artillery strikes and studied the actions of large airborne assault forces as well as ground attack and bomber aviation.

Even in failures he found something instructive. Once at an exercise in the course of parallel pursuit, a tank brigade was to reach a line simultaneously with the cavalry division.

However, the tank troops, having used up their fuel, fell behind. Iyeronim Petrovich concluded: "A tank brigade is a new formation, it has still not been studied and mastered. Our task is to quickly learn to command it both in conducting combat independently as well as jointly with the cavalry, the rifle troops and aviation." (3)

I. P. Uborevich showed constant concern for establishing the facilities for combat training. Upon his initiative the training fields, firing ranges and artillery ranges were improved. Due to the tenacity of I. P. Uborevich, an engineer range was established near Moscow and this played an important role in the training of combat engineer units and conducting experimental work. Iyeronim Petrovich was largely responsible for developing active air defense

weapons. He was one of the leaders of the first exercises for the air defense units and was the first to propose chemical warfare training for the troops. Under his leadership many models of rifle, artillery and tank weapons were modernized.

In visiting troop units, Iyeronim Petrovich was always interested in how political work was being conducted and missed no opportunity to meet with the political workers, the secretaries of the party organizations and to talk with the Red Armymen. I. P. Uborevich assigned a major role to the Komsomol in the area of national defense. At a rally of the best Komsomol soldiers from the Belorussian Military District, he commented: "Great work is needed to indoctrinate oneself and all the Red Armymen as courageous, conscious and politically intelligent fighters and this is now the main task." (4)

I. P. Uborevich made a substantial contribution to working out the 1936 RKKA Field Manual.

Many students of Iyeronim Petrovich proved to be talented military leaders. MSU I. S. Konev said: "I never cease thanking fate for the fact at one time I happened to undergo harsh but excellent schooling under his command. I consider him one of my best teachers." (5)

Iyeronim Petrovich took an active part in social and state life. He was repeatedly elected to party and soviet bodies and was a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the USSR Central Executive Committee. At the 16th and 17th Party Congresses he was chosen a candidate member of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee. By all his activities aimed at strengthening the defense capability of the socialist motherland, I. P. Uborevich has truly merited the glory and love of the Soviet people.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. For the life and activities of I. P. Uborevich (1896-1937) see: "Komandarm Uborevich. Vospominaniya druzey i soratnikov" [Army Commander Uborevich. Memoirs of Friends and Associates], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964; V. Savostyanov, P. Yegorov, "Komandarm pervogo ranga (I. P. Uborevich)" [An Army Commander of the First Rank (I. P. Uborevich)], Moscow, Politizdat, 1966; VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 12, 1961; No 9, 1964; No 3, 1966; No 1, 1976 and others.
2. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 102, inv. 3, file 873, sheet 87.
3. "Komandarm Uborevich," p 154.
4. V. Savostyanov, P. Yegorov, op. cit., p 204.



5. I. Kh. Bagramyan, "Velikogo naroda synovya" [Sons of a Great People], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 263.

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## REFERENCE BOOK OF CITIES LIBERATED BY SOVIET ARMY IN WORLD WAR II

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 86 (signed to press 24 Dec 85) pp 91-92

[Review by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col (Ret) D. D. Gorbatenko of the book "Osvobozhdeniye gorodov. Spravochnik po osvobozhdeniyu gorodov v period Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945" (The Liberation of Cities. A Reference on the Liberation of Cities During the Period of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, 598 pages]

[Text] Voenizdat has published a reference on the liberation of cities during the period of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 [the reviewed book]. This was prepared by the Military History Institute and the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense. It has brought together data on the cities liberated by the Soviet Army in the course of the struggle against the Nazi occupiers both on Soviet territory as well as in other countries. Here exhaustive information is offered on the troops participating in the liberation of each of them and this is of particular value for the military reader.

The reference consists of two parts. The first includes information on 727 cities presently located on Soviet territory.

The second part contains data on the liberation of 484 cities in 9 European countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, Norway, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia as well as Asian countries: China and Korea.

In the reference one can find the precise date of the occupation and liberation of one or another city. It gives the troops of what front and precisely what armies, corps, divisions, brigades and regiments liberated the city, in the course of what operation this occurred and gives the names of the commanders. Listed are the formations and units which distinguished themselves in battles and received honorific designators from the names of the liberated cities. This concerns both the Ground Forces as well as the Air Forces and Navy.

It should be stressed that previously unpublished information on the units and formations awarded honorific designators according to orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief are now being made available to the scholarly community.

As is known, after 12 January 1944, such data were not contained in the orders and only the names of the commanders were given. The reference provides the full names of the outstanding units and formations, the military ranks and names of their commanders. This is of particular value for those concerned with studying the combat record of the Soviet Army units and formations.

The names of the cities given in the reference which were liberated by the Soviet Armed Forces correspond to the topographic maps and the documents of the 1940's. Population points are considered in states according to the established postwar boundaries.

The names of the Soviet cities have been taken from the official references for the administrative-territorial dividing of the USSR. Here included also are the former East Prussian cities located on the territory of the present Kaliningrad Oblast as well as the cities of Transcarpathia and the southern part of Sakhalin Oblast.

The appendices to the reference contain a list of the foreign cities included in it (by state), a chronicle of the liberation of all the cities, abbreviated names, a name index, information on the command and political personnel of the fronts, armies, fleets and flotillas on the day (period) of the liberation of the cities. All of this significantly facilitates the use of the reference and provides additional information.

In analyzing the content of the published reference work, it must be said that it does not include all the cities of the USSR and other countries liberated by the Soviet Army in the course of the war. It does not include those such as Andreapol, Vidlitsa, Demyansk, Loyev, Khristinovka and others, although fierce fighting was carried out for the liberation of these population points. For example, on the battles for the liberation of Andreapol in the "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945] it states: "In surmounting stubborn enemy resistance, the Soviet troops on 16 January defeated the Nazis and liberated Andreapol." (1)

There are also individual inaccuracies. Thus, the names of the cities located on the territory which changed hands after the war are given in two versions in the reference: that existing up to 1945 and the modern one. On page 365 the city Krolewska Huta (Chorzow) is given. At the same time, the correct name of the city is Konigshutte (Krolewska Huta) (and precisely this is given in the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, No 261 of 28 January 1945). The city received the name of Chorzow significantly later. On page 89 it states that for liberating the city of Yelgava the formations and units which particularly distinguished themselves were given the honorific designator of Mitava without explaining that at one time Yelgava was called Mitava.

In the information on the liberation of the city of Terioki (pages 239-240) it is stated that the troops involved in breaching the enemy defenses on the Karelian Isthmus to the north of Leningrad, in the course of which Terioki and many population points were liberated, a commendation was proclaimed by an order of the Supreme High Command of 11 June 1944, and a salute of 20 artillery salvos from 224 guns was made in Moscow. But here for some reason

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